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STATIUS

(45–96 AD)



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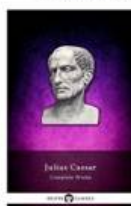
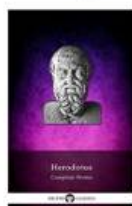
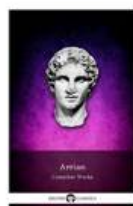
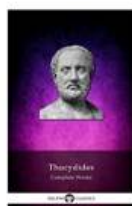
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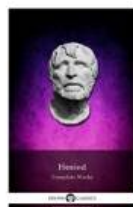
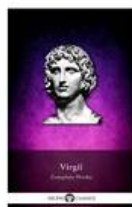
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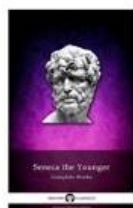
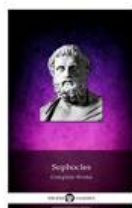
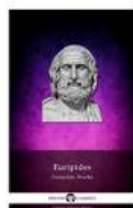
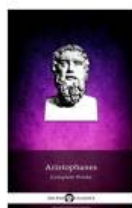
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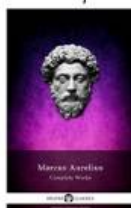
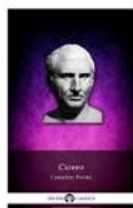
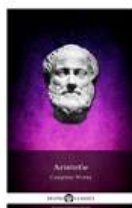
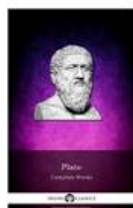
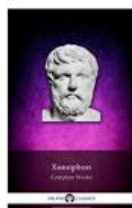
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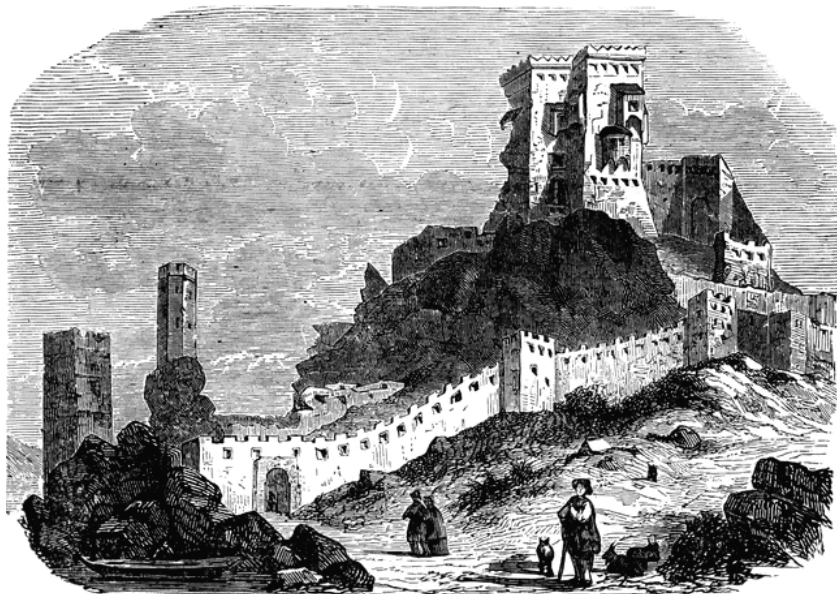
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The Complete Works of
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The Translations



Naples, Italy — Statius' birthplace

THE THEBAID



Translated by J. H. Mozley

Statius' masterpiece, the epic poem *The Thebaid*, is composed in twelve books and written in dactylic hexameter. The poem concerns the Theban myth of the assault of the seven champions of Argos against the city of Thebes. During the reign of Emperor Domitian, Statius composed the epic over 12 years, commencing the project in 80 AD and completing it in 92, when the poet was aged 35. The poem is divided into twelve books in imitation of Virgil's *Aeneid* and is composed in 9,748 hexameter verses, the standard metre of Greco-Roman epics. From the poem's epilogue it is clear that the poet considered the *Thebaid* to be his magnum opus and believed that it would secure him fame for posterity.

Statius' *Thebaid* deals with the same subject as an early Greek epic of the same name, comprised of several thousand lines, now only surviving in fragments and which was attributed by some classical authors to Homer. Perhaps a more important source for Statius was the long epic *Thebais* of Antimachus of Colophon, an important poem both in the development of the Theban cycle and the evolution of Hellenistic poetry. Also significant for Statius were the myth's many treatments in Greek drama, represented by surviving plays such as Aeschylus' *The Seven Against Thebes*, Sophocles' *Antigone* and both of Euripides' dramas *Phoenissae* and *The Suppliants*.

Nevertheless, Statius is highly indebted to the Latin model of Virgil, which he candidly acknowledges in the epilogue. Statius emulates Virgil's Odyssean and Iliadic book division, concentrating aetiological material and travelling in the first six books and focusing on battle narratives in the second six, while many episodes allude to sections in the *Aeneid* (such as the correspondence of the Dymas and

Hopleus episode to Nisus and Euryalus). Ovid's considerable influence can also be traced in Statius' handling of cosmic structure, description, style and verse.

The first book of the *Thebaid* concerns the seven champions and their swearing of a binding oath, before setting forth on their campaign against Thebes. The epic poem opens with a priamel in which the poet rejects several themes dealing with Theban mythology and decides to focus on the House of Oedipus. The narrative begins with Oedipus' prayer to the chthonic gods and subsequent curse on his sons Polyneices and Eteocles, who he feels have mistreated him. The Fury Tisiphone hears Oedipus' prayer and visits the earth to fulfil the curse, causing strife between the brothers. This is followed by a council of the gods in which Jupiter informs his fellow gods of his plan to involve Thebes and Argos in a war.

When Juno passionately pleads for Argos, she is silenced by Jupiter's unshakable decision. Mercury is sent to the underworld to fetch the shade of Laius to drive Eteocles to war. Meanwhile, Polyneices is driven by a storm to Argos and the threshold of Adrastus's palace, where he meets Tydeus, an exile from Calydon who is also seeking shelter, and fights with him. Adrastus invites the two exiles in, feasts them, and, in fulfilment of a prophecy, offers them his daughters to marry; he then goes on to explain the aetiology of the festival the Argives are celebrating, telling the story of Apollo's rape of Psamathe, the death of her and her child Linus, followed by Apollo's vengeful summoning of a child-eating monster from the underworld which later was slain by Coroebus, and finally, Coroebus' offer of self-sacrifice to Apollo to end a plague at Argos. The book ends with Adrastus' prayer to Apollo.

The *Thebaid* was popular in Statius' lifetime and it is believed that Roman schoolboys were already memorising passages from the epic poem before it was completed. Statius was personally favoured by Emperor Domitian and the educational use of his poem might be seen as a consequence of official favour, demonstrating an obvious parallel with the previous relationship between Virgil, the author of the *Aeneid*, and his Emperor Augustus. Statius' epic remained a popular piece of Latin literature for many centuries, a testimony to its literary merit and lasting appeal. A commentary on the *Thebaid* is

transmitted under the name of Lactantius Placidus, dating from 5-6th century CE, which has proven useful to modern scholars.



The siege of Thebes by the seven Argive champions — detail from an Attic black-figure hydria, c. 560–550 BC.

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'Oedipus cursing his sons' by Marcel Baschet, 1883



A depiction of the Seven champions swearing an oath.

BOOK 1

[1] My spirit is touched by Pierian fire to recount the strife of brethren, and the battle of the alternate reign fought out with impious hatred, and all the guilty tale of Thebes. Whence, O goddesses, do ye bid me begin? – Shall I sing the origins of the dreadful race, the Sidonian rape and the inexorable terms of Agenor's law, and Cadmus searching o'er the main? Far backward runs the story, should I tell of the anxious husbandman of hidden war, sowing battles in the unhallowed soil, and searching to the uttermost, relate with what song Amphion bade the Tyrian mountains move to form a city's walls, whence came Bacchus' grievous wrath against his kindred towers; what deed fierce Juno wrought; against whom unhappy Athamas caught up his bow, and why with Palaemon in her arms his mother quailed not to leap into the vast Ionian sea. Nay rather here and now I will suffer the sorrows and the joys of Cadmus to have gone by: let the troubled house of Oedipus set a limit to my song, since not yet may I venture to utter the theme of the standards of Italy and the triumphs of the North, or Rhine twice brought beneath our yoke and Ister twice subject to our law and the Dacians hurled down from their conspiring mount, or how in those days or scarce-approaching manhood Joe was forfended to attack, and of thee, O glory added to the Latian name, whom succeeding early to thy sire's latest exploits Rome longs to be her own for ever. Yea, though a closer bound confine the stars, and the shining quarter of the sky that knows nought of Pleiads or Boreas or rending thunderbolt tempt thee, though he who curbs the fiery-footed steeds set with his own hand upon thy locks the exalted radiance of his diadem, or Jupiter yield thee an equal portion of the great heaven, abide contented with the governance of men, thou lord of earth and sea, and give constellations to the sky. A time will come when emboldened by Pierian frenzy I shall recount thy deeds: now do I pitch my harp but to the singing of Aonian arms and the sceptre fatal to both tyrants; of their madness unchecked by death and the strife of flames in the dissension of the funeral pyre; of kings' bodies lacking burial and cities drained by mutual slaughter, when the dark-blue waters of

Dirce blushed red with Lernaean gore, and Thetis stood aghast at Ismenos, once wont to graze arid banks, flowing down with mighty heaps of slain. Which hero first dost thou make my theme, O Clio? Tydeus, uncontrolled in wrath? the sudden chasm that gaped for the laurel-crowned prophet? Distraught Hippomedon, too, repelling his river-foe with corpses demands my song, and I must lament the gallant Arcadian and his wars, and sing with a yet fiercer thrill the fate of Capaneus.

[46] Already had Oedipus with avenging hand probed deep his sinning eyes and sunk his guilty shame in eternal night, abiding in a long and living death. But while he hugs his darkness and the uttermost seclusion of his dwelling, and keeps his secret chamber which the sun's rays and heaven behold not, yet with unwearied wings the fierce daylight of the mind hovers around him, and the Avenging Furies of his crimes assail his heart. Then he displays to heaven those empty orbs, the cruel, pitiful punishment of his life, and with blood-stained hands beats upon the hollow earth, and in dire accents utters this prayer: "Gods who hold sway over guilty souls and over Tartarus crowded with the damned, and thou O Styx, whom I behold, ghastly in thy shadowy depths, and thou Tisiphone, so oft the object of my prayer, be favourable now, and further my unnatural wish: if in aught I have found favour; if thou didst cherish me in thy bosom when I fell from my mother's womb, and didst heal the wounds of my pierced feet; if I sought the lake of Cirrha where it winds between the two summits of the range, when I could have lived contented with the false Polybus, and in the Phocian strait where three ways meet grappled with the aged king and cleft the visage of the trembling dotard, searching for my true sire; if by wit of the foreshowing I solved the riddles of the cruel Sphinx; if I knew exulting the sweet ecstasy and fatal union of my mother's bed, and passed many an unhallowed night, and begot sons for thee, as well thou knowest, yet soon, greedy for punishment, did violence to myself with tearing fingers and left my eyes upon my wretched mother – hear me to the end, if my prayer be worthy and such as thou wouldest inspire my ranging heart withal. Sightless though I was and driven from my throne, my sons, on whatever couch begotten, attempted not to give me guidance or consolation in my grief; nay,

haughtily (ah! the maddening sting!) an raised to royalty with me long dead, they mock my blindness and abhor their father's groans. Do these too hold me accursed? and the father of gods beholds it, and does naught? Do thou at least, my due defender, come hither, and begin a work of vengeance that will blast their seed for ever! Set on thy head the gore-drenched circlet that my bloody nails tore of, and inspired by their father's curses go thou between the brethren, and with the sword sunder the binding ties of kinship. Grant me, thou queen of Tartarus' abyss, grant me to see the evil that my soul desires, nor will the spirit of the youths be slow to follow; come thou but worthy of thyself, thou shalt know them to be true sons of mine."

[88] So prayed he, and the cruel goddess turned her grim visage to hearken. By chance she sat beside dismal Cocytus, and had loosed the snakes from her head and suffered them to lap the sulphurous waters. Straightway, faster than fire of Jove or falling stars she leapt up from the gloomy bank: the crowd of phantoms gives way before her, fearing to meet their queen; then, journeying through the shadows and the fields dark with trooping ghosts, she hastens to the gate of Taenarus, whose threshold none may cross and again return. Day felt her presence, Night interposed her pitchy cloud and startled his shining steeds; far off towering Atlas shuddered and shifted the weight of heaven upon his trembling shoulders. Forthwith rising aloft from Malea's vale she hies her on the well-known way to Thebes: for on no errand is she swifter to go and to return, not kindred Tartarus itself pleases her so well. A hundred horned snakes erect shaded her face, the thronging terror of her awful head; deep within her sunken eyes there glows a light of iron hue, as when Atracian spells make travailing Phoebe redden through the clouds; suffused with venom, her skin distends and swells with corruption; a fiery vapour issues from her evil mouth, bringing upon mankind thirst unquenchable and sickness and famine and universal death. From her shoulders falls a stark and grisly robe, whose dark fastenings meet upon her breast: Atropos and Proserpine herself fashion her this garb anew. Then both her hands are shaken in wrath, the one gleaming with a funeral torch, the other lashing the air with a live water-snake.

[114] She halted, where the sheer heights of vast Cithaeron rise to meet the sky, and sent forth from her green locks fierce repeated

hisses, a signal to the land, whereupon the whole shore of the Achæan gulf and the realm of Pelops echoed far and wide. Parnassus also in mid-heaven heard it, and turbulent Eurotas; with the din Oete rocked and staggered, and Isthmos scarce withstood the waves on either side. With her own hand his mother snatched Palaemon from the curved back of his straying dolphin steed and pressed him to her bosom.

[123] Then the Fury, swooping headlong upon the Cadmean towers, straightway cast upon the house its wonted gloom: troubled dismay seized the brothers' hearts and the madness of their race inspired them, and envy that repines at the others' happiness, and hate-engendering fear; and then fierce love of power, and breach of mutual covenant, and ambition that brooks not second place, the dearer joy of sole supremacy, and discord that attends on partnered rule. Even so would a farmer fain unite under the plough-yoke two picked bullocks of the savage herd, but they indignant – for not yet has the frequent coulter bowed those arching necks to the sinewy shoulders – pull contrariwise and with strength well-matched break harness and confound the furrows with divers tracks: not otherwise does furious discord enrage the proud brothers. 'Twas agreed to change rule for exile by the ordinance of the alternate year. By a grudging law they bade their fortunes change, so that a new claimant should ever embitter the monarch's fast-expiring term. No other bond united the brethren, this was their sole stay from arms, nor destined to endure to a second reign. Yet then no ceilings glittered with thick plates of yellow gold, nor did quarried Grecian pillars bear aloft vast halls that could freely spread the serried mass of clients; no spears kept guard o'er a monarch's troubled slumbers, no sentinels groaned at the recurring duty of the watch; they thought not to entrust precious stones to the wine-cup, nor to soil gold with food; 'twas for naked power the brethren armed, a starveling realm was their cause of battle. And while they dispute which of the twain shall plough scant Dirce's squalid fields, or boast himself on the Tyrian exile's lowly throne, the laws of God and man are broken, righteousness perisheth, and honour both in life and death. Alas! unhappy ones! what limits set ye to your wrath? what if it were the sky's farthest bounds ye dared so impiously, whereon the sun looks

when he issues from the eastern gate and when he sinks into his Iberian haven, or the lands he touches afar with slanting devious ray, lands that the North wind freezes or the moist South warms with fiery breath? nay, even though the wealth of Phrygia and Tyre were gathered as the prize! A land of horror and a city God-accursed sufficed to rouse your hatred, and hell's madness was the price of sitting in the seat of Oedipus!

[164] And now by the losing of the hazard Polynices saw his reign deferred. How proud a day for thee, fierce tyrant, when alone and unchallenged in thy palace thou didst look and behold all power thine, all other men thy subjects, and never a head but bowed beneath thy sway! Yet already murmurs are creeping among the Echionian folk, the people is at silent variance with its prince, and, as is the wont of a crowd, 'tis the claimant that they love. And one among them, whose chief thought it was to hurt by mean and venomous speech and never to bear the yoke of rulers with submissive neck, said: "Is this the lot that the hard fates have appointed for our Ogygian land, so often to change those whom we must fear, and to give uncertain allegiance to an alternate sway? From hand to hand they toss the destinies of peoples and of their own accord make Fortune fickle. Am I always to serve princes that take their turn of exile? Is this thy will and purpose for thy kindred realm, great Lord of heaven and earth? Does the ancient augury still have power for Thebes, since Cadmus, bidden search in vain the Carpathian sea for the winsome burden of the Sidonian bull, found an exile's kingdom in the Hyantean fields, and in the gaping of the pregnant earth bequeathed the warfare of brethren as an omen to his posterity for ever? See how the tyrant, rid of his colleague, rises erect more fiercely threatening under cruel brows! what terror in his look, how overbearing his pride! will this man ever stoop to subject rank? But the other was gentle to our prayers, affable of speech, and more patient of the right. What wonder? he was not alone. A worthless crowd indeed are we, ready for every chance, at the bidding of every lord, whosoe'er he be! As the sails yield to the cold north wind on this side and to the cloudy east wind on that, and the vessel's fate hangs wavering – alas! for the cruel, intolerable lot of peoples, racked by doubt and fear! – so now one commands and the other

threatens.”

[197] But now by Jove’s command the High Court and chosen council of the gods had assembled in the spacious halls of the revolving sphere, in heaven’s inmost depths. Equally removed from hence is the whole world’s extent, the abodes of east and west, and earth and sea outspread beneath the infinite sky. Loftily through their midst moves the King himself making all tremble, yet with countenance serene, and takes his seat on the starry throne: nor dare they sit, the heavenly ones, until the sire himself with tranquil hand permit them. Next a crowd of wandering demigods and Rivers, of one kin with the high clouds, and Winds, their clamours hushed by fear, throng the golden halls. The arching vaults of heaven are all agleam with majesty, the heights glow with a fuller radiance, and alight that is not of earth blooms upon the portals. When quiet was commanded and heaven’s orb fell silent, he began from his lofty throne – the sacred words have authority and power immutable, and Destiny waits upon his voice: “Of Earth’s transgressions I complain, and of Man’s mind that no Avenging Powers can satiate. Am I ever to be spent in punishing the wicked? I am weary of venting my anger with the flashing brand, long since are the busy arms of the Cyclopes failing, and the fires droop that serve Aeolian anvils. Yea, I had suffered the Sun’s steeds to run free of their false driver, and heaven to be burned with their straying wheels and earth to be foul with the ashes that once were Phaethon. Yet naught availed it, nor that thou, brother, didst with thy strong spear send the sea flooding wide over the forbidden land. Now am I descending in punishment on two houses, whereof I am myself progenitor. The one branches from the stem to Persean Argos, the other flows from its source to Aonian Thebes. In all the implanted character abides: who knows not Cadmus’ bloodshed and the array of warring Furies so oft summoned from the depths of hell, the mothers’ unhallowed joys and frenzies ranging of the forests, and the reproaches of gods that must be veiled in silence? Scarce would the period of day or passing night avail me to recount the impious doings of the race. Nay, this unnatural heir has even ventured to climb his father’s couch and defile the womb of his innocent mother, returning (oh! horror!) to his own life’s origin. Yet he has made atonement everlasting to the gods above, casting

forth from himself the light of day, nor any more feeds upon the air of heaven; but his sons (a deed unspeakable) trampled on his eyes as they fell. Now, now are they prayers fulfilled, terrible old man! deserving art thou, yea, deserving in thy blindness to hope for Jove as they avenger. New strife will I send upon the guilty realm, and uproot the whole stock of the deadly race. Let the gift of Adrastus' daughter and her ill-omened nuptials furnish me the seeds of war. This race too I am resolved to scourge with punishment: for never hath the deceit of Tantalus, nor the crime of the pitiless banquet been forgotten in the secret counsels of my heart."

[248] So spake the Almighty Sire. But wounded by his words and nursing sudden wrath in a heart aflame Juno thus makes answer: "'Tis I, then, justest of gods, I whom thou biddest to engage in war? for thou knowest how I ever give aid of men and might to the Cyclopean towers and the far-famed sceptre of great Phoroneus, although there thou didst ruthlessly cast on sleep and slay the guardian of the Pharian heifer, ay, and dost enter barred turrets in a shower of gold. Concealed armours I pardon thee: that city I hate where thou goest undisguised, where thou soundest the thunders that proclaim our high union, and wieldest the lightnings that are mine. Let Thebes atone her crimes; why dost thou choose Argos as her foe? Nay, if such discord hath seized our holy marriage-chamber, go, raze Sparta to the ground, bring war's destruction upon Samos and old Mycenae. Why anywhere is the altar of thy spouse made warm by sacrificial blood or fragrant with heaps of eastern incense? Sweeter is the smoke that rises from the votive shrines of Mareotic Coptos or from the wailing crowds and brazen gongs of river Nile. But if 'tis the evil deeds of former men that mankind now doth expiate, and this resolve hath come so tardily to minister to thy wrath, to cast back thy gaze through days of old, at what far stage of time doth it suffice to drive away earth's madness and purge the backward-reaching ages? Choose straightway that spot for thy beginning where Alpheus following afar the track of his Sicilian love glides by with sea-wandering wave. Here on accursed ground the Arcadians set thee a shrine – yet it shames thee not – here is Oenomaus' chariot of war and the steeds more fitly stalled beneath Getic Haemus, nay even yet the severed heads and mangled corpses

of the suitors lie stark and unburied. Yet hast thou here the welcome honours of a temple, yea, and guilty Ida pleases thee, and Crete that tells falsely of thy death. Why dost thou grudge me then to abide in my Tantalean land? Turn hence the tumults of war, and have compassion on thine own blood. Many a wide and wicked realm hast thou, that can better suffer the crimes of offending sons.”

[283] Juno had finished her mingled entreaty and reproach. But he made reply not in hard words, though cruel was its purport: “In truth I deemed not that thou wouldest bear with favouring mind all that I might devise, albeit justly, against thy Argos, nor does it escape me that, did occasion grant, Bacchus and Dione, would dare to make long pleading on Thebes’ behalf, but reverence for my authority forbids. For by those awful waters, my brother’s Stygian stream, I swear – an oath abiding and irrevocable, - that naught will make me waver from my word! Wherefore, my Cyllenian, in winged speed outstrip the winds that bear thee, and gliding through the limpid air down to the dusky realms tell this message to thy uncle: Let old Laius betake himself to the world above, Laius, whom his son’s blow bereft of life and whom by the law of Erebus profound the further bank of Lethe hath not received; let him bear my commands to his hateful grandson: His brother, to whom exile has brought confidence and his Argive friendship boastful pride, let him in despite of kin keep far from his halls – as already he doth well desire – and deny him the alternate honour of the crown. So will angry deeds be begotten, and the rest will I lead on in order due.”

[303] Obedient to his father’s word the grandson of Atlas straightway fastens on his ankles the winged sandals, and with wide hat veils his locks and tempers the brilliance of the stars. Then he took in his right hand the wand wherewith he was wont to dispel or call again sweet slumber, wherewith to enter the gates of gloomy Tartarus or summon back dead souls to life. Then down he leapt, and shuddered as the frail air received him; delaying not, he wings his speedy flight through the void on high, and draws a mighty curve upon the clouds.

[312] Meanwhile the son of Oedipus, long time a wandering outlaw from his father’s lands, traverses by stealth the waste places of Aonia. Already he broods on the lost realm that was his due, and

cries that the long year stands motionless in its tardy constellations. One thought recurring night and day holds him, could he ever but behold his kinsman degraded from the throne, and himself master of Thebes and all its power; a lifetime would be bargain for that day. Now he complains that his exile is but time consumed in idleness, but soon the gust of princely pride swells high, and he fancies his brother already cast down and himself seated proudly in his place; fretful hope keeps his mind busy, and in far-reaching prayers he tastes all his heart's desire. Then he resolves to journey undismayed to the Inachian cities and Danaan lands and to Mycenae dark with the sun's withdrawal, whether it were the Fury piloting his steps, or the chance direction of the road, or the summoning of resistless Fate. He leaves the Ogygian glades that resound with frenzied howlings, and the hills that drink deep of Bacchic gore, then passes the region where long Cithaeron settles gently to the plain and stoops his weary height to the sea. Thereafter with dizzy climb along a rocky path he puts behind him Sciron's infamous cliffs and Scylla's country where the purple monarch ruled, and kindly Corinth, and in the midmost plain hears two shores resound.

[336] But now through the wide domains which Phoebus, his day's work ended, had left bare, rose the Titanian queen, borne upward through a silent world, and with her dewy chariot cooled and rarefied the air; now birds and beasts are hushed, and Sleep steals o'er the greedy cares of men, and stoops and beckons from the sky, shrouding a toilsome life once more in sweet oblivion. Yet no reddening clouds gave promise of the light's return, nor as the shadows lessened did the twilight gleam with long shafts of sun-reflecting radiance; black night, blacker to earthward and shot by never a ray, veiled all the pole. And now the rocky prisons of Aeolia are smitten and groan, and the coming storm threatens with hoarse bellowing: the winds loud clamouring meet in conflicting currents, and fling loose heaven's vault from its fastened hinges, while each strives for mastery of the sky; but Auster most violent thickens gloom on gloom with whirling eddies of darkness, and pours down rain which keen Boreas with his freezing breath hardens into hail; quivering lightnings gleam, and from the colliding air bursts sudden fire. Already Nemea and the high peaks of Arcadia that border the forests

of Taenarum are drenched; Inachus flows in mighty spate, and Erasinus swelling high into icy billows. Streams that before were dusty road-tracks now defy all stay of confining bank, Lerna surges up from her deepest depths and foams with her ancient poison. Shattered are all the forests, aged boughs are swept out upon the storm, and the shady summer-haunts of Lycaeus, unbeheld before by any suns, are now stripped bare to view.

[364] Yet he, now marvelling at the rocks down-hurled from the cloven mountains, now listening in terror to the cloud-born torrents dashing from the hills, and the raging flood whirling away home of shepherd and stall of beast, slackens not his pace, though distraught and uncertain of his way, but through the dark silences devours the lonely stretches of his road; on every side fear and the thought of his brother assail his heart. And just as a sailor, caught in a tempest on the deep, to whom neither lazy Wain nor Moon with friendly beam show bearings, stands beggared of resource in mid-tumult of sky and sea, and even now expects the treacherous reef submerged beneath the wave, or waits to see foaming jagged rocks fling themselves at his prow and heave it high in air: so the Cadmean hero threads the darkness of the forests with hastening step, while with huge shield he braves the lairs of fearsome beasts and forward-stooping thrusts through the brushwood thickets; terror's sombre influence adds spurs to his resolve, till from above the town of Inachus, conquering the gloom with beam of light downpoured upon the shelving walls, shone forth the Larissaeon height. Thither sped by every hope he hies him fast, with Juno's temple of Prosymna high on his left hand, and yonder the black marsh of Lerna's water branded by Herculean fire, and at length the gates are opened and he enters. Straightway he spies the royal portals; there he flings down his limbs stiffened with rain and wind, and leaning against the unknown palace doors woos gentle slumber to his hard couch.

[390] There king Adratus, verging now toward old age from life's mid-course, ruled his folk in tranquil governance, rich in the wealth of ancestry, and on either side tracing his line to Jove. Issue lacked he of the stronger sex, but was prosperous in female offspring: two daughters gave him pledge of love and service. To him had Phoebus at fate's bidding told that sons-in-law drew nigh – a deadly horror to

tell! yet soon was the truth made manifest – in the shapes of bristly swine and tawny lion. Naught comprehends the sire therein for all his ponderings, nor thou, wise Amphiaraus, for thy master Apollo forbids. Only the father's heart sakens ever in deep-felt anxiety.

[401] But lo! Olenian Tydeus leaving ancient Calydon by fate's decree – the guilty terror of a brother's blood drives him forth – treads beneath night's slumberous veil the same wild ways, bewailing likewise wind and rain, and with ice-sheeted back, and face and hair streaming with the storm, comes to the self-same shelter, whereof the former stranger, stretched on the cold earth, had part. Thereat so chanced it that both were seized with bloody rage, and suffered not a shared roof to ward of the night; for a while they tarry with exchange of threatening words, then when flung taunts had swelled their anger to the pitch, each uprose, set free his shoulders, and challenged to naked combat. Taller the Theban, with long stride and towering limbs and in life's prime, yet was Tydeus in strength and spirit no whit the less, and though his frame was smaller greater valour in every part held sway. Then closing fiercely they deal many a blow on face and temple, like showers of darts or Rhipaeian hail, and with bent knee belabour hollow loins. Even as when the fifth year brings back his festival to the Pisaeian Thunderer, and all is dust and heat and the crude sweat of men, while yonder the rival favours of the crowd urge on the youthful striplings, and the mothers, excluded from the scene, await the prizes of their sons: so these with but hate to spur them, and inflamed by no lust of praise, fall on, and the sharp nails probe far into their faces and force their way into the yielding eyes. Perchance – so hot their anger – they had bared the swords girt to their sides, and thou hadst lain, O Theban youth, the victim of a foeman's arms – far better so – and earned a brother's meed of tears, had not the king, marvelling at the night's unwonted show of clamour and the fierce panting groans deep-heaved, bent his steps thither: age and the burden of grave cares held him now in broken fitful slumber. And when proceeding through the high halls with attendant train of torches he beheld, the bars undone, upon the fronting threshold a sight terrible to tell, faces torn and cheeks disfigured with streaming blood: “Whence this fury, stranger youths?” he cried, “for no citizen of mine would dare such violence

as this; whence this implacable desire to let your hate disturb the tranquil silence of the night? Has then day so little room, or is it grievous to suffer, even for a while, sleep and peace of mind? But now come tell me, whence are ye sprung, whither do ye fare, and what may be your quarrel? Mean of soul ye cannot be – such anger proves it – even through bloodshed the noble signs of proud race show clear.”

[448] Scarce had he spoken, when with mingled clamour and sidelong glance together they begin: “Achaean prince! most gracious monarch! what need of words? thou seest thyself this face all bloody” – their words are lost in the confused sound of bitter accents. Then Tydeus taking first place of speech thus recounts his tale: “Desiring solace for my unhappy lot I left the wealth of Calydon, nurse of monsters, and he Acheloian fields: and lo! in your boundaries deepest night o’ertakes me. Who was he to forbid me shelter from the sky? or was it because he won his way first to this threshold? But twy-form Centaurs stall with each other, so ’tis said, and Cyclopes have peace together beneath Aetna; nay even to wild monsters nature has given laws and their own rule of right; and for us to share a lodging on the ground –? But why waste words? either thou, whoe’er thou art, shalt to-day depart rejoicing in my spoils, or, if rising pain dulls not my blood, thou shalt know me to be of mighty Oeneus’ stock and no degenerate scion of my forefather Mars!” “Nor lack I spirit or race” returns the other, but conscious in his heart of ruthless fate he hesitates to name his sire. Then kindly Adrastus: “Nay come now, cease the threatening words which night or sudden wrath or valour prompted, and pass beneath my palace-roof. Now let your right hands be joined to pledge your hearts. These doings have not been vain nor without the sanction of the powers above: perchance even these angry quarrels do but foreshadow a friendship to come, so that ye may have pleasure in remembrance.” Nor were the old man’s words an empty presage, for they say that from their comradeship in wounds grew such loyalty as Theseus showed when he shared extremest peril with wanton Pirithous, or Pylades when he rescued distraught Orestes from the fury of Megaera. So then, yielding their savage hearts to the king’s soothing words – even as waters that winds have made their battleground sink to rest, and yet

on the drooping sails one surviving breath is long in dying – even so submissive they entered the palace.

[482] Here first he has leisure to let his glance pass o'er the heroes' dress and mighty weapons. On Polynices' back he spies a lion flayed, all rought with uncombed mane, like to that one which in the Teumesian glades Amphitryon's son laid low in his boyish years and clothed himself withal, before the battle with the monster of Cleonae. Tydeus' broad shoulders the proud spoils of Calydon, grim with bristles and curved fang, strive to enfold. Aghast and motionless stands the old king at so dire an omen, calling to mind the divine oracles of Phoebus and the warning uttered from the inspired cell. His countenance is fixed in frozen silence, while through his limbs ran a thrill of joy; he felt that they had come, led by heaven's clear prompting, whom prophetic Apollo in riddling obscurities had foreshown to be his destined sons-in-law, under the feigned guise of beasts. Then stretching forth his hands to the stars, "O Night," he cries, "who castest thy mantle over toiling earth and heaven, and sendest the fiery stars on their divers roaming courses, gracious referesh of the mind, till the next sun shed blithe upspringing upon faint mortality, thou, kindly Night, dost bring me of thy bounty assurance long sought in perplexity and doubt, and dost reveal the ancient purposes of fate: aid now my work, and certify the omens thou hast given. Ever shall this house throughout the circling periods of the year hold thee high in honour and in worship; black bulls of chosen beauty shall pay thee sacrifice, O goddess! And Vulcan's fire shall eat the lustral entrails, whereo'er the new milk streams. Hail, ancient truth of mystic Tripod! hail, secret grotto! I have found, O Fortune, that the gods are gods indeed!"

[510] So saying, and joining arms with both he goes forward to the inner chamber of his dwelling. Even yet the fires slumbered on the grey ashes of the altars, and the poured offerings of the sacrifice were yet warm; he bids the flames again be roused and the late banquet renewed. His henchmen obey his words in emulous haste: manifold tumult echoes throughout the palace. Some array the couches with delicate purple and rustling embroidery of gold and pile the cushions high, some polish smooth and place in order the tables: others again set about to banish the darkness of gloomy night by stretching chains

for gilded lanterns; these have the task of roasting on a spit's point the bloodless flesh of slain beasts, those of crushing grain on a stone and heaping the bread in baskets; Adrastus rejoices to see his house aglow with obedient service.

[525] And now he himself, raised high on the proud cushions an ivory throne, shone resplendent; elsewhere the youths recline, their wounds healed with cleansing water, and beholding each other's scarred visages bear mutual forgiveness. Then the aged king bids Acaste be summoned – his daughters' nurse and trusty guardian, chosen to keep ward on maiden modesty consecrated to lawful wedlock – and murmurs in her silent ear.

[533] She stayed not upon his bidding, but straightway both maidens came forth from their secret bower, in countenance, marvellous to tell, like to quiver-bearing Diana and warrior Pallas, yet without their terror. They spy the new faces of the heroes and are shamed; pallor at once and blushes made havoc of their bright cheeks, and their timorous eyes resought their reverend sire. When in the banquet's course hunger was quelled, the son of Iasus, as his custom was, bade his thralls bring a goblet fair-wrought with figures and shining with gold, wherefrom both Danaus and elder Phoroneus were wont to pour libations to the gods. Thereon was embossed work of images: all golden, a winged youth holds the snake-tressed Gorgon's severed head, and even upon the moment – so it seems – leaps up into the wandering breeze; she almost moves her heavy eyes and drooping head, and even grows pale in the living gold. Here the Phrygian hunter is borne aloft on tawny wings, Gargara's range sinks downwards as he rises and Troy grows dim beneath him; sadly stand his comrades, in vain the hounds weary their throats with barking and pursue his shadow or bay at the clouds. From this he pours the streaming wine and in order due calls on all the denizens of heaven, Phoebus before the rest; Phoebus' presence all invoke with praise, garlanded with reverent myrtle, friend and thrall alike, about his altar; for in his honour they make holiday, and the atlars, refreshed by lavish incense, glow through wreaths of smoke.

[557] "Perchance ye may inquire, O youths," thus says the monarch, "what means this sacrifice, and for what reason we pay Phoebus signal honour. Urged by no ignorant fear, but under stress

of dire calamity, the Argive folk aforetime made this offering. Lend me your hearing, and I will recount the tale. When that the god had smitten the dark and sinuous-coiling monster, the earth-born Pytho, who cast about Delphi his sevenfold grisly circles and with his scales ground the ancient oaks to powder, even while sprawling by Castalia's fountain he gaped with three-tongued mouth athirst to feed his deadly venom: when having spent his shafts on numberless wounds he left him, scarce fully stretched in death over a hundred acres of Cirrhaean soil, then, seeking fresh expiation of the dead, he came to the humble dwelling of our king Crotopus. A daughter, in the first years of tender maidenhood, and wondrous fair, kept this pious home, a virgin chaste. How happy, had she ne'er kept secret tryst with the Delian, or shared a stolen love with Phoebus! For she suffered the violence of the god by Nemea's stream, and when Cynthia had twice five times gathered her circle's visage to the full, she brought forth a child, Latona's grandson, bright as a star. Then fearing punishment – for her sire would ne'er have pardoned a forced wedlock – she chose the pathless wilds, and stealthily among the sheep-pens gave her child to a mountain-wandering guardian of the flock for nurture. No cradle worthy of a birth so noble, hapless infant, did thy grassy bed afford thee, or thy woven home of oaken twigs; enclosed in the fibre of arbutus-bark thy limbs are warm, and a hollow pipe coaxes thee to gentle slumbers, while the flock shares thy sleeping-ground. But not even such a home did the fates permit, for, as he lay careless and drinking in the day with open mouth, fierce ravening dogs mangled the babe and took their fill with bloody jaws. But when the tidings reached the mother's horror-struck ears, father and shame and fear were all forgot; herself straightway she fills the house with wild lamentation, all distraught, and baring her breast meets her father with her tale of grief. Nor is he moved, but bids her – Oh horrible! even as she desires, suffer grim death.

[596] “Too late remembering thy union, O Phoebus, thou dost devise a solace for her miserable fate, a monster conceived ‘neath lowest Acheron in the Furies’ unhallowed lair: a maiden's face and bosom has she, from her head an ever-hissing snake rises erect, parting in twain her livid brow. Then that foul pest, gliding at night with unseen movement into the chambers, tore from the breasts that

suckled them lives newly-born, and with blood-stained fangs gorged and fattened on the country's grief. But Coroebus, foremost in prowess of arms and high courage, brooked it not, and with chosen youths, unsurpassed in valour and ready at life's hazard to enlarge their fame, went forth, a willing champion. From dwellings newly ravaged she was going, where in the gateway two roads meet, the corpses of two little ones hung at her side, and still her hooked talons claw their vitals and the iron nails are warm in their young hearts. Thronged by his band of heroes the youth rushed to the attack, and buried his broad blade in her cruel breast, and with flashing steel probing deep the spirit's lurking-place at length restored to nether Jove his monstrous offspring. What joy to go and see at close hand those eyes livid in death, the ghastly issue of her womb, and her breasts clotted with foul corruption, whereby our young lives perished! Appalled stand the Inachian youth, and their gladness, though great now sorrow is ended, even yet is dim and pale. With sharp stakes they mangle the dead limbs – vain solace for their grief – and beat out the jagged grinding teeth from her jaws: they can – yet cannot glut their ire. Her did ye flee unfed, ye birds, wheeling round with nocturnal clamour, and ravening dogs, they say, and wolves in terror upon her, dry-mouthed.

[627] “But against the unhappy youths the Delian rises up fierce at the doom of his slain avengeress, and seated on the shady top of twin-peaked Parnassus with relentless bow he cruelly scatters shafts that bring pestilence, and withers beneath a misty shroud the fields and dwellings of the Cyclopes. Pleasant lives droop and fail, Death with his sword cuts through the Sisters' threads, and hurries the stricken city to the shades. Our leader then inquiring what the cause may be, what is this baleful fire from heaven, why Sirius reigns throughout the whole year, the word of the same god Paeon brings command, to sacrifice to the blood-stained monster those youths that caused her death. O valour heaven-blest! O worth that will merit a long age of fame! No base craven thou to hide thy devoted deed, or shun in fear a certain death! Unabashed he stood on the threshold of Cirrha's temple, and with these words gives fierce utterance to his sacred rage: ‘Not sent by any, nor suppliant, O Thymbraean, do I approach thy shrine: duly and consciousness of right have turned my

steps this way. I am he, O Phoebus, who laid low thy deadly scourge, I am he whom thou, ruthless one, dost seek out by poison-cloud, and the light of day defiled, and the black corruption of a baleful heaven. But even if raging monsters be so dear to the gods above, and the destruction of men a cheaper loss to the world, and heaven be so stern and pitiless, in what have the Argives sinned? My life, my life alone, most righteous of the gods, should be offered to the fates! Or is it more soothing to thy heart that thou seest homesteads desolate, and the countryside lit up by the burning roofs of husbandmen? But why by speaking do I delay the weapons of thy might? our mothers are waiting, and the last prayers for me are being uttered. Enough: I have deserved that thou should'st be merciless. Bring then thy quiver, and stretch thy sounding bow, and send a noble soul to death! but, even while I die, dispel the gathered mist that form on high hangs pallid over Inachian Argos.'

[661] "Equity hath regard for the deserving. Awe of slaughter took hold on Leto's fiery son, and yielding he grants the hero the sad boon of life; the deadly clouds fly scattering from our heaven, while thou, thy prayer heard, departest from marvelling Phoebus' door. Thenceforward do we in solemn banquet yearly renew the appointed sacrifice, and placate the shrine of Phoebus in recurring festival. Of what stock come ye, whom chance has led to these our altars? though, if but now my ears did rightly catch your outcry, Oeneus of Calydon is thy sire, and thine the lordship of Parthaonia's house. But thou, do thou reveal who thou art that comest thus to Argos, since now the hour permits of varied discourse."

[673] Straightway did the Ismenian hero bend his sad looks to earth, and cast an injured Tydeus a silent sidelong glance; then after a long pause he spoke: "Not at these honours paid to heaven is it meet to ask me of my birth or land or ancient descent of blood; hard is it to confess the truth amid the holy rites. But if your wish is urgent to know my unhappy tale, Cadmus was the ancestor of my sires, my land Mavortian Thebes, my mother is Jocasta."

[681] Then Adrastus moved to friendly compassion – for he recognized him – said: "Why hide what all have heard? this know we, nor doth Fame journey so distant from Mycenae. Yea, of that reign, and the madness, and the eyes that knew shame of their seeing,

even he hath heard who shivers 'neath an Arctic sun, and he who drinks of Ganges, or sails in to the Ocean darkening to the west, and they whom the shifting shoreline of the Syrtes fails. Cease to lament, or to recount the woes of thy fathers: in our house also hath there been many a fall from duty, but past error binds not posterity. Only do thou, unlike to them, win by fortune's favour this reward, to redeem thy kindred. And now the frosty wagoner of the Hyperborean Bear droops languidly, with backward slanting pole. Pour your wine upon the altar-hearths, and chant we our prayer, again and yet again, to Leto's son, the saviour of our fathers!

[696] "Phoebus, Sire! whether the copses of Patara and Lycia's snowy uplands keep thee busy, or thou delightest to bathe thy golden hair in Castalia's pure drew, or whether as Thymbra's lord thou dwellest in Troy, where they say thou didst willingly bear on thankless shoulders blocks of Phrygian stone, or whether Latonian Cynthus pleases thee, casting his shadow on the Aegean wave, and Delos, settled sure in the deep, nor needing now thy search, - thine are the arrows and the bending of bows against the savage enemy afar; to thee did celestial parents grant the cheeks' eternal bloom; thou art skilled to foreknow Fate's cruel handiwork, and the destiny that lies beyond, and high Jove's pleasure, to what peoples pestilence cometh or wars, what change of sceptres comets brings; thou makest the Phrygian subject to thy lyre, and for thy mother's honour dost stretch the earth-born Tityos on the Stygian sands; thee the green Python and the Theban mother horror-struck beheld triumphant with thy quiver, to avenge thee grim Megaera holds fast the starving Phlegyas, who lies ever pressed beneath cavernous rocks, and tortures him with the unholy feast, but mingled loathing defeats his hunger: be thou present to our succour, mindful of our hospitality, and shed on the fields of Juno the blessings of thy love, whether 'tis right to call thee rosy Titan, in the fashion of the Achaemenian race, or Osiris bringer of the harvest, or Mithras, that beneath the rocky Persean cave strains at the reluctant-following horns."

BOOK 2

[1] Meanwhile the winged son of Maia returns from the cold shades, fulfilling the errand of great Jove; on every side sluggish clouds hinder his way and misty air enfolds him, no Zephyrs wafted his course, but the foul vapours of the silent world. On this side Styx encircling its nine regions, on that a barrier of fiery torrents encloses his path. Behind him follows old Laius' trembling shade, still halting from his wound; for deeper than the hilt had his kinsman's impious swordthrust pierced into his life and sped the first blow of Avenging Wrath; yet on he goes, strengthening his steps with the healing wand. Then barren woods and spirit-haunted fields and groves of lurid hue stand in amaze, and Earth herself marvels that the backward road lies open, nor even to the dead and those already bereft of light was lacking the livid blight of envy. One there, perversely eager beyond the rest ever to revile the gods – thus indeed had he come by a grievous doom – and to repine at happiness, cries: "Good speed, thou lucky one, on what behest soever summoned, whether by Jove's command, or whether an overmastering Fury drive thee to meet the day, or frenzied witch of Thessaly bid thee come forth from thy secret sepulchre: alas! thou that wilt see the pleasant sky and the sunlight thou didst leave behind and the green earth and the pure river-springs, yet more sadly wilt return again to this darkness."

[26] Cerberus lying on the murky threshold perceived them, and reared up with all his mouths wide agape, fierce even to entering folk; but now his black neck swelled up all threatening, now had he torn and scattered their bones upon the ground, had not the god with branch Lethaeon soothed his bristling frame and quelled with threefold slumber the steely glare.

[32] There is a place – named Taenarum by the Inachian folk – where foaming Malea's dreaded headland rises into the air, nor suffers any vision to reach its summit. Sublime stands the peak and looks down serene on winds and rain, and only to weary stars affords a resting-place. There tired winds find repose, and there the lightnings have their path; hollow clouds hold the mountain's midmost flanks, and never beat of soaring wing comes nigh the

topmost ranges nor the hoarse clap of thunder. But when the day inclines towards its setting, a vast shadow casts its fringes wide over the level waters, and floats upon mid-sea. Around an inner bay Taenaros curves his broken shore-line, not bold to breast the outer waves. There Neptune brings home to haven his coursers wearied by the Aegean flood; in front their hooves paw the sand, behind, they end in fishy tails beneath the water. In this region, so 'tis said, a hidden path conducts the pallid ghosts, and dowers with many a dead the spacious halls of swarthy Jove. If Arcadian husbandmen speak truth, shrieks are heard there and the moaning of the damned, and the land is all astir with hurrying grisly forms; often the cries and blows of the Furies have resounded till mid-day, and the baying of Death's tri-formed warder has scared the rustics from the fields.

[55] By this way then did the nimble god, all wrapped about with dusky shadow, leap forth to the upper world, and shake from his face the vapours of the nether region, and make serene his countenance with draughts of living air. Thence by Arcturus and the moon's mid silences o'er fields and cities he wends his way. Sleep, driving Night's coursers, met him, and rose abashed to salute his godhead, turning aside from his celestial path. Beneath the god flies the shade, and knows again his lost stars and the land that bore him; and now he looks down on Cirrha's heights and Phocis, that his own corpse polluted. Now they were come to Thebes, and hard by his own son's threshold Laius groaned, tarrying to enter the well-known house. But when he saw his own yoke hanging on the lofty pillars and the chariot still stained with blood, almost had he in wild fear turned back and fled, nor could the Thunderer's high commands restrain him, nor the waving of the Arcadian wand.

[71] That too chanced to be the day marked by the well-known falling of the Thunderer's brand, when thy birth's untimely hastening, O infant Euhius, caused thy sire to take thee to himself. Therein had the Tyrian settlers found cause to pass the night in sleepless rivalry of sport; scattered far and wide through house and field, amid garlands and mixing-bowls drained dry they panted forth the wine-god under the light of day; then many a boxwood pipe resounded and cymbals louder than the beat of bull-hide drum. Cithaeron himself exultant had set prudent matrons flocking in a

nobler frenzy through his pathless groves: even as the Bistonians in wild concourse hold their revels upon Rhodope or in the depths of Ossa's vales. For them one of the flock snatched half-alive from the lion's jaw is a feast, and to abate their fury with new milk is luxury; but when the fierce fragrance of Ogygian Inachus breaths upon them, then how glorious to fling stones and goblets, and with the shedding of guiltless comrades' blood to begin the day anew and appoint once more the festal banquet!

[89] Such was the night when the swift Cyllenian glided down on the silent air to the couch of the Echionian prince, where in huge bulk he had flung his limbs on a bed piled high with Assyrian coverlets. Alas! for mortal hearts that know not their destiny! He feasts and he slumbers. Then the old man performs what he is bidden, and, lest he seem but a false phantom of the night, puts on the darkened visage of the ancient seer Tiresias, and his voice and well-known woollen bands. His own long hair and hoary beard combed downward from the chin remain, and his own pallid hue, but through his locks there runs the feigned circlet, and the sacred fillets entwined with the grey olive are plain to view. Then he seemed to touch his breast with the olive bough and give utterance to these fateful words: "This is no time of sleep for thee, thou sluggard, who liest careless of thy brother in the depth of night! long time have great deeds summoned thee, slothful one, and weighty preparings for what shall be. But thou, even as if some ship's captain, while the south winds are already raising the billows on the Ionian main, should lie idle beneath a black storm-cloud, forgetful of his tackling and of the rudder that sway the waters, – thou tarriest. And he even now – so Fame can tell – waxes proud of his new wedlock, and gets to himself might whereby to seize the realm and refuse thee thy part, and appoints himself an old age in thy halls. Adrastus, foretold by omen to be the father of his bride, and the Argive dowry raise his spirits, yea, and Tydeus, stained by a brother's blood, hath he graciously received into a lifelong bond. Hence swelling pride, and a promise to thy brother of long exile for thee. The sire of gods himself in pity sends me down to thee from on high: hold fast to Thebes, and drive away thy kinsman who is blind with lust of rule, and will dare as much against thyself, nor suffer him all agape for a brother's death

to trust any more in the treachery he devises, nor to bring Mycenae to queen it over Cadmus.”

[120] He spoke, and departing – for already the sun’s horses were driving in rout the pale stars – tore from his head the chaplet and woollen bands, and revealed himself for his grandsire, then leaning over his dread grandson’s couch bared his throat’s open wound and flooded his sleep with streaming blood. The other, startled from his slumbers, springs up and leaps from the couch, full of horror, and shaking from him the phantom blood shrinks appalled from his grandsire and seeks out his brother. Just as when a tigress hearing the noise of hunters has grimly faced the nets and shaken off lazy sleep; ’tis war she yearns for, and she loosens her jaws and trims her talons, and soon she rushes amid the companies and carries off in her mouth a man still breathing, to feed her savage whelps: even so stirred by rage the chieftain dreams of war against his absent brother.

[134] And now Aurora rising from her Mygdonian resting-place had scattered the cold shadows from the high heaven, and shaking the dew-drops from her hair blushed deep in the sun’s pursuing beams; toward her through the clouds the rosy morning-star turns his late fires, and with slow steed leaves an alien world, until the fiery father’s orb be full replenished and he forbid his sister to usurp his rays. Then did the aged son of Talaus and with no long delay the heroes twain of Dirce and of Achelous rise swiftly from their couches. Upon them, wearied by blows and endurance of the storm, had Sleep poured all his horn’s bounty; but scant repose visited the breast of the Inachian monarch, while in his thoughts he broods upon heaven’s will and the new ties of friendship, and wonders what destinies he is admitting to his house in his new-found sons-in-law. They meet in the mid chambers of the palace, and draw night and grasp each other’s hand in turn, then seat themselves where they may best make interchange of secret counsel, and, the others hesitating, Adrastus thus beings: “Peerless youths, whom a propitious night has brought heaven-prompted to my realm, whose steps my own Apollo has guided even to my palace in spite of rain and lightning-flash and the Thunderer’s unseasonable sky, I cannot deem it unknown to you and the Pelasgian folk, how zealous a crowd of suitors seeks alliance with my house; for my two daughters, joyful pledge of

grandchildren, are reaching equal years of full-grown maidenhood. How great their beauty and their modesty, trust not a father's word, nay, ye could judge at yesterday's banquet. Many a one, with throne and wide-extending sway to boast of, ahs desired them – 'twere long to tell the tale of Pheraean and Oebalian princes – and mothers also throughout the towns of Achaea, for hope of posterity; nor did Oeneus thy own father despise more proffered unions, nor the sire of Pisa's bride with his terrible chariot-reins. But none of Spartan birth nor of them that hail from Elis may I choose for my daughters' consorts: to you doth ancient destiny pledge my blood and the guardianship of my halls. The gods are gracious, in that ye come to me so high in birth and spirit that I rejoice in their oracles. This is the prize that the night's sufferings have won, this is your reward for the blows ye bore."

[173] They heard him, and for a while held their eyes fixed in mutual gaze, seeming to yield each other place of speech. But Tydeus, in every deed more daring, begins: "O how sparingly doth thy sage mind impel thee to proclaim thy own renown, and how greatly by worth dost thou outdo all fortune's favour! To whom should Adrastus yield in power? Who knows not that thou, when driven from thy ancestral Sicyon's throne, didst give law to turbulent Argos? and would that thou wert willing, O just Jupiter, to entrust to these hands the races that Dorian Isthmus contains within the interior lands, and those which it removes beneath its other bound! The interrupted light would not have fled from dire Mycenae, nor would the vales of Elis have groaned at the fierce contests, nor divers Furies afflicted divers kings, nor happened all that thou, O Theban, canst best bewail. We verily are willing, and our hearts are open to thee." So spake he, and the other added: "Would any one refuse to welcome such a father of his bride? Though Venus smile not yet upon us exiles, banished from our land, nevertheless all sorrows of our hearts are calmed, and the grief is gone that held fast upon our minds. No less joyfully do we take unto us this solace, than a ship rent by the tearing gale beholds the friendly shore. We delight to enter upon a reign of happy omen, and to pass, under thy destiny, what remains of our allotted lives and labours." Without more ado they rise, and the Inachian sire adds weight of eager words to every promise, and vows

that he will succour them and bring them back to their fathers' realms.

[201] The Argives, therefore, as the report spreads through the city that husbands for his daughters have come to the king's court, and that illustrious Argia, and Deipyle famed no less for beauty, are giving in wedlock their lusty maidenhood, eagerly prepare for great rejoicing. Fame flies through the kindred cities, and is carried from lip to lip in the neighbouring lands even as far as the Lycaean and beyond Parthenian glades and the Ephyrean countryside, nor less does the same tumultuous goddess descend upon Ogygian Thebes. With wings full-stretched she broods over those walls, bringing terror that accords with the past night to the Labdacian chief: the welcome and the marriage does she relate, and the royal covenant and the union of houses – what mad licence in the devilish monster's tongue! – and at last she tells of war.

[213] The long-expected day had spread the Argives all abroad: the royal halls are filled with joyous gathering, here may they look face to face upon their forefathers, and see bronzes that vie with the living countenance. So much hath skill dared and wrought! Father Inachus himself, twin-horned, leans leftward upon his titled urn; old Iasius supports him and calm Phoroneus and warrior Abas, and Acrisius angry with the Thunderer, and Coroebus bearing a head upon his naked sword, and the grim likeness of Danaus already meditating murder; and many a prince thereafter. Then the common folk in clamorous flood are given entrance at the proud portals, while the whole company of chiefs and all who in degree stand night the monarch's majesty take first place of rank. Within, the palace is all aglow with sacrificial fires, and loud with female tumult; a chase band of Argive women surrounds the mother-queen, others thronging about he maidens reconcile them to the new bonds and reassure their timorous hearts. They moved in splendour and majesty of look and dress, with eyes cast down and modest blush suffusing all their fairness; that last regretful love of maidenhood steals silently into their hearts, and the first shame of guilt overwhelms their countenances; then a generous rain bedews their cheeks, and tears bring joy to their tender-hearted parents. Just so might Pallas and Phoebus' sterner sister glide down together from high heaven,

terrible alike in armour and in looks, and with golden hair braided on their heads, bringing their maiden company, from Cynthus she and she from Aracynthus; they wouldst thou never learn by long gazing, even had thine eyes leave to gaze, which had the greater beauty, which the greater charm, or which had more of Jove, and were they but pleased to take each other's dress, Pallas would beseem the quiver and Delia the crested helmet.

[244] The sons of Inachus contend in rivalry of joy, and weary the gods with vows, as each had household-gear and power of offering. These make supplication with entrails and the victim's life, those with bare turf; others, heard no less, if their heart be accepted would fain win merit of the gods by incense, and shade their portals with the spoil of the woodlands. But lo! a sudden fear – so cruel Lachesis commanded – strikes on their hearts and robs the sire of his rejoicing, and turns the day to gloom. On her threshold they were drawing nigh to Pallas the unwedded, who among cities prefers not the Muechian hills to Argive Larissa; here by ancestral rite the daughters of Iasus, so soon as their chaste years grew ripe for wedlock, were wont to make offering of virgin tresses, and pray pardon for the first marriage-bed. As they climb the steps and approach the lofty pile, there fell from the temple's highest summit a brazen shield, the spoil of Arcadian Euhippus, and overwhelmed the heralding torches, the festal light of the marriage train; and while they dare not yet to make sure advance, a mighty trumpet-blare, heard from the shrine's inmost recesses, filled them with terror. All at the first shock of panic turned toward the king, then denied they had heard aught; yet all are troubled by the event's dire omen, and increase their fear by various talk. Nor was it wonderful: for thou wast wearing, Argia, the ill-starred ornament of thy husband's giving, the dread necklace of Harmonia. Far back the story runs, but I will pursue the well-known tale of woes, whence came it that a new gift had such terrible power.

[269] The Lemnian, so they of old believed, long time distressed at Mars' deceit and seeing that no punishment gave hindrance to the disclosed amour, and the avenging chains removed not the offence, wrought this for Harmonia on her bridal day to be the glory of her dower. Thereat, through taught mightier tasks, the Cyclopes labour,

and the Telchines famed for their handiwork helped in friendly rivalry of skill; but for himself the sweat of toil was heaviest. There forms he a circlet of emeralds glowing with a hidden fire, and adamant stamped with figures of ill omen, and Gorgon eyes, and embers left on the Sicilian anvil from the last shaping of a thunderbolt, and the crests that shine on the heads of green serpents; then the dolorous fruit of the Hesperides and the dread gold of Phrixus' fleece; then divers plagues doth he intertwine, and the king adder snatched from Tisiphone's grisly locks, and the wicked power that commends the girdle; all these he cunningly anoints about with lunar foam, and pours over them the poison of delight. Not Pasithea, eldest of the gracious sisters, nor Charm nor the Idalian youth did mould it, but Grief, and all the Passions, and Anguish, and Discord, with all the craft of her right hand. The work first proved its worth, when Harmonia's complaints turned to dreadful hissing, and she bore company to grovelling Cadmus, and with long trailing breast drew furrows in the Illyrian fields. Next, scarce had shameless Semele put the hurtful gift about her neck, when lying Juno crossed her threshold. Thou too, unhappy Jocasta, didst, as they say, possess the beauteous, baleful thing, and didst deck thy countenance with its praise – on what a couch, alas! to find favour; and many more beside. Last Argia shines in the splendour of the gift, and in pride of ornament and accursed gold surpassed her sister's mean attiring. The wife of the doomed prophet had beheld it, and at every shrine and banquet in secret cherished fierce jealousy, if only it might ever be granted her to possess the terrible jewel, nought profited, alas! by omens near at hand. What bitter tears she doth desire! to what ruin tend her impious wishes! Worthy is she, indeed, but what hath her hapless consort deserved, and his deluded arms? And what the guiltless frenzy of her son?

[306] When twice six days had ended the regal banqueting and the rejoicing of the people, the Ismenian hero turned his gaze towards Thebes, and would fain now be seeking his kingdom. For he recalls that day, when by the hazard that favoured his brother he stood in Echion's palace stripped of power, and saw his cause deserted by the gods and his friends all slunk away in hurry and alarm, himself defenceless on every side and all his fortune fled. For but one sister

had dared to escort the exile on his sad path; from her even had he parted, his journey scarce begun, and in deep anger repressed his tearful grief. Then nightly and day by day does he recount in order those whose joy he marked as he went forth, those who were foremost in flattery of the unjust prince, or whom he had himself seen to bewail his exile; anguish devours his mind, and furious wrath, and hope, than which the heart can bear no heavier burden, when 'tis long deferred. Brooding thus in his mind upon a cloud of care, he makes ready to set out for Dirce and the Cadmean home denied him. Even as a chieftain bull, banished from his loved valley, whom a conqueror has driven from his wonted meadow and bidden low far parted from his stolen love, yet anon in exile takes pleasure in his mighty thews, and his neck fresh-blooded waxes strong again, and he bethinks him of the oaks that he has shattered, and eager for battle demands back the pastures and the captive herds; already in speed of foot and power of horn hath he the mastery, his conqueror himself is dismayed at his return, and the astonished herdsmen scarce now him for the same: not otherwise does the Teumesian youth sharpen his wrath in brooding silence. But his faithful wife had marked his secret yearning to be gone, and lying on the couch in the first pale light of dawn, her arms about her lord, "What thoughts of flight," she said, "are these thou ponderest? nought escapes a lover's eye. I know thy wakeful complainings and thy bitter sighs, thy ever-troubled slumber. How often touching thee with my hand do I find this face all wet with tears, and thy breast loud groaning with thy weight of cares! 'Tis not the sundering of our marriage-bond that moves me, nor a widowed youth; although our love is still fresh, nor has our couch yet since the bridal lost he first glow of passion. 'Tis thy own safety, O beloved – I hasten to confess it – that wrings my heart. Wilt thou seek thy realm unarmed, unfriended, and be able to quit thine own Thebes, should he refuse it? Yea, Report, that is ever cunning to catch the mind of princes, tells that he is proud and arrogant in his stolen power, and ill-disposed to hear thee; nor had he yet reigned a full year. Terrified too am I now by soothsayers, now by entrails that speak of threatening gods, by flight of birds, or by disturbing visions of the night; and ah! never do I call to mind that Juno came falsely to me in my dreams. Whither doth thy journey

lead thee? except it be a secretly cherished passion that draws thee to Thebes, and union with a nobler house.” Then at last the Echionian youth brief-laughing consoled his wife’s tender grief, and set timely kisses on her sorrowful cheeks and stayed her tears: “Free thy mind of fear; prudent counsels, believe me, win peaceful days; cares beyond thy years become thee not. But should one day the Saturnian father take knowledge of my fate, and Justice, if she think at all to glance down from heaven and defend the right on earth: then perchance that day shall dawn for thee, when thou shalt see thy husband’s walls, and go in queenly pomp through two cities.”

[363] So saying he hurried forth from the chamber that he loved, and sadly accosts Tydeus, already the partner of his enterprise, already sharing his troubles with faithful heart – so strong the bond of love that united them after their quarrel – and Adrastus, father of his spouse. Long time do they hold counsel, when after pondering many a scheme one plan at last finds preference with all, to make trial of his brother’s constancy and seek by humble request a safe return to the realm. Bold Tydeus volunteers the mission; yea, and thee too, bravest of the Aetolian race, would Deipyle fain stay by many a tear, but her father’s command and the assurance of any envoy’s safe return and her sister’s just entreaties make her yield.

[375] And now he had accomplished the full measure of a journey made rough by forests and seashore: where lay the marsh of Lerna and the burnt Hydra’s heat makes warm the depths of those unrighteous waters, and where through the length of Nemea scarce is heard to scanty song of the yet timid shepherds; where Ephyre’s eastern side slopes to the winds of Orient and the Sisyphian havens lie, and the wave that vents its wrath upon the land lies in the curved retreat of Lechaëum sacred to Palaemon. Thence passes he by Nisus, leaving thee, kindly Eleusis, on his left hand, and at last treads the Teumesian fields and enters the Agenorean towers. There he beholds the cruel Eteocles high upon a throne and girt round with bristling spears. The appointed season of his reign already past, he was holding the folk under savage governance in his brother’s stead; prepared for every crime he sits, and complains of so late a claiming of his promise.

[389] Standing in the midst – the branch of olive proclaims him

ambassador – when asked his name he declared it and the purpose of his coming; then, rude of speech as ever and quick to anger, and with mixture of harsh words, although his plea was just, he thus began: “Hadst thou simple honesty left thee and regard for a sworn bond, ‘twere more right that envoys should go hence to thy brother, now thy year is finished, and that thou in due course shouldst put off thy state and contentedly leave thy throne, so that he, after long wanderings and unseemly hardships in many a strange city, should at length succeed to the promised kingdom. But since thy darling passion is to reign, and power exerts its flattering charm, we summon thee; already hath the swift circle brought round the starry globe, and the mountains have regained the shadows that they lost, since they brother hath suffered the unhappy lot of poverty and exile in unknown cities; now is it time thou too didst spend thy days under Jove’s open sky, and let earth’s coldness freeze thy limbs, and pay submissive court at the hearths of strangers. Set a term to thy prosperity; long enough in rich pomp of gold and purple hast thou mocked at thy brother’s year of mean poverty; I warn thee, unlearn of thine own will the joys of ruling, and in patient exile merit thy return.”

[410] He ended, but the other’s fiery heart rages beneath his silent breast, as when a serpent angered by a flung stone darts up close at hand, whose limbs long thirst has racked, down in its hollow lair, and gathered all the venom to its throat and scaly neck. “Had they been doubtful signs that forewarned me of my brother’s quarrel, did not his secret hate shine clear as day to me, that bold assurance alone would suffice, whereby you, in mind his very pattern, thus prelude his fury, as though already a new train of sappers were breaching our fenced walls, and the trumpets were kindling the hostile bands to fierceness. Even if thou hadst been speaking to Bistonians face-to-face in their midst, or to the pale Geloni, on whom the sun shines not, thou wouldst have been more sparing of thy eloquence, and more observant of what is fair and just, in opening thy cause. Nor would I accuse thee of this madness: thou speakest but at command. Now, therefore, since all your words are threats, and ye demand the sceptre with warrant neither of trust nor peace, and your hands are ever on the sword-hilt, carry back in turn this message of mine, far

short of thine as yet, to the Argolic prince: The fortune that is my right, the sceptre that due privilege of years hath assigned me, I hold, and will hold long. Keep thou thy royal dower, the gift of thy Inachian consort, pile up thy Danaan treasure – for why should I envy thee those nobler deeds? – rule Argos and Lerna under happy auspices! Be it mine to hold the rough pastures of Dirce, and the shores narrowed by the Euboean waves, nor think it shame to call unhappy Oedipus my sire! Let ancestral splendour be thy boast – scion of Pelops and Tantalus! – and by a nearer channel of descent unite Jove’s blood with thine. Will thy queen, accustomed to her father’s luxury, endure this simple home? rightly would my sisters perform their anxious tasks for her, my mother, unsightly from long mourning, and that accursed dotard, heard clamouring perchance from his dark seclusion, would give her offence! The people’s minds are already accustomed to my yoke; I am ashamed, alas! for the folk and elders alike, lest they should suffer so oft the uncertainty of fortune and the distressful change of rulers, and unwillingly obey a doubtful throne. Unsparing to a people is a short reign; turn and behold the dismay and horror of my citizens at my danger! Shall I abandon these, whom under thy sway sure punishment awaits? ’Tis in anger, O kinsman, that thou comest. Or suppose me willing: the fathers themselves will not suffer me to render up the crown, if I but know their love and there is gratitude for all my bounty.”

[451] No more endured he, but even in mid-speech flung at him this retort: “Thou shalt restore,” he cries, and again, “Thou shalt restore! Nay, should an iron rampart fence thee, or Amphion with the strains of another song draw about thee a triple wall, in no wise shall fire or sword defend thee from paying for thy bold deed, and, ere thou die, beating thy captive diadem on the ground beneath our arms. Such a fate wilt thou deserve; those do I pity, whose cheap lives thou dost seize and hurl to death in horrid butchery, worthy king, and their wives and babes and thou, Ismenus, roll down upon thy blood-stained waters! This then is loyalty, and this thy trusted word! Nor marvel I at the crimes of your race; such was the first author of your blood, such your incestuous sires; but there is a flaw in your parentage, thou only art the son of Oedipus, and this, O man of violence, shall be the reward for thy sin and crime! We claim our

year! But I waste words – “ Boldly thus he shouted back while still in the doorway, then dashed out headlong through their disordered ranks. Even so the famous champion of Oenean Diana, with bristles stiff and lightning stroke of tusked jaw, hard pressed though he be by the Argive band, that rolls down stones upon him and boughs of trees uprooted from Achelous’ banks, yet leaves now Telamon, now Ixion prostrate on the ground, and attacks thee, Meleager; there at last was he stayed upon the spear-thrust, and relaxed the weapon’s force in the fierce-struggling shoulder. Such was the Calydonian hero, as he left the yet timorous council, with savage threats, as thou ‘twere he who was denied the kingdom; he hastes away, hurling from him the branch of olive. The mothers in amazement watch him from their thresholds’ edge, and utter curses on the fierce son of Oeneus, and withal in their secret hearts upon the king.

[482] But the monarch is not slothful, nor lacks cunning resource of crime and fraud unspeakable. A faithful company of chosen warriors he urges now by bribes, now by ardour of persuasive words, and fiercely plots a nocturnal affray, and would fain attack the ambassador – a name revered by peoples through the ages – by treachery and the silent-lurking sword. What is there that kings hold not vile? What cunning would he devise, were it his brother thou didst place in his power, O Fortune! O blind and guilty counsels! O ever timorous crime! A sworn band of soldiery go out against one single life, as though they made ready to storm a camp or level a city’s lofty side with the ram’s battering blows; fifty thus form close array, and march in order through the tall gates. Heaven favour now thy courage, who art deemed worthy of so numerous a foe!

[496] A nearer road leads them through copses, where by a hidden path they make the better speed and travel by a cut through the dense woods. It was a choice spot for a stratagem: at a distance from the city two hills bear close upon each other with a grudging gulf between; the shadow of a mountain above and leafy ridges of curving woodland shut them in. Nature has implanted treachery in the place, and the means of hidden ambush. Through the middle of the rocks threads a rough and narrow track, below which lies a plain and a broad expanse of sloping fields. Over against it a threatening cliff rises high, the home of the winged monster of Oedipus; here

aforetime she stood, fierce uplifting her pallid cheeks, her eyes tainted with corruption and her plumes all clotted with hideous gore; grasping human remains and clutching to her breast half-eaten bones she scanned the plains with awful gaze, should any stranger dare to join in the strife of riddling words, or any traveller confront her and parley with her terrible tongue; then, without more ado, sharpening forthwith the unsheathed talons of her livid hands and her teeth bared for wounding, she rose with dreadful beating of wings around the faces of the strangers; nor did any guess her riddle, till caught by a hero that proved her match, with failing wings – ah! horror! – from the bloody cliff she dashed her insatiate paunch in despair upon the rocks beneath. The wood gives reminder of the dread story: the cattle abhor the neighbouring pastures, and the flock, though greedy, will not touch the fateful herbage; no Dryad choirs take delight in the shade, it ill beseems the sacred rites of Fauns, even birds obscene fly far from the abomination of the grove. Speeding hither with silent steps comes the doomed band; leaning on their spears and with grounded arms held ready, they await their haughty foe, and set strong guard around the wood.

[527] Night had begun to shroud the sunlight in her dewy pall, and had cast over the earth her dark shadow. The hero drew nigh the woods, and from a lofty mound sees the red gleam of warriors' shields and plumed helmets, where the forest boughs leave an open space, and through the opposing shade the flickering moonlight plays upon the brazen armour. Appalled at the sight he yet went onward; he but draws to him his spiky darts, and the sword sheathed to the hilt. Then first he makes question, in no base terror: "Whence are ye, men, what mean ye lurking thus armed?" No voice made answer, the suspicious silence holds no sure pledge of peace. Lo! a spear, hurled by the mighty arm of Chthonius, the leader of the band, flies through the dusky air; but heaven and fortune let no aid to his venture. Yet through the covering of Olenian boar and the black bristly hide it sped, over his shoulder, near drawing blood, and widowed of its point strikes harmless on his throat. With hair erect and blood frozen about his heart he looks this way and that, fiercely alert and pale with rage, nor deems so large a troop to be equipped against him: "Come forth against me! out with you into the open! why such timorous

daring, such arrant cowardice? alone I challenge you, alone!" Nor waited they; but when he saw them, more than he thought, swarming up from countless lurking places, some issuing from the ridges, others in ever-growing numbers coming from the valley-depths, nor few upon the plain, as when the first cry drives the encircled quarry into the open, and the road all lit by gleams of armour, he makes for the heights of the dire Sphinx – the only path of safety in his bewilderment – and tearing his nails upon the sheer cliff he scales the dreadful steep and gains mastery of the rock, where he has security behind and a clear downward range of harm. Then he tears away from the rocks a huge boulder, that groaning bullocks scarce with full strength could move from the ground and drag up to the wall; then heaving with all his force he raises and strives to poise the deadly mass: even as great-hearted Pholus lifted the empty mixing-bowl against his Lapith foes. Right in death's path, aghast they view him high aloft; the mountain falls hurtling, and whelms them; at once human limbs and faces, weapons and armour lie in mingled ruin. Four men in all groan mangled beneath that one rock; straightway the host flees panic-stricken, dashed from their enterprise. For no cowards were they who lay there dead: Dorylas of the lightning stroke, in glowing valour a match for princes, and Theron of the seed of Mars, proudly confident in earth-born ancestors, Halys, second to none in swaying at will his reined steed, but fallen on those fields in dismounted flight, and Phaedimus, who drew his birth from Pentheus, and found thee, Bacchus, still his foe.

[576] But when he saw the band in terror and disordered rout from the sudden fate of these, he hurls two javelins – these alone did he carry, and had leant them against the mountain – and sends them after the fugitives. Soon, lest darts should fall on his exposed breast, of his own will he leapt down swiftly to the level plain, and seized the shield which he saw had rolled away when Theron was crushed down, and with his wonted covering of back and head, and breast defended by his enemy's shield he stood his ground. Then gathering again into one dense body the Ogygians advance: instantly Tydeus draws his Bistonian blade, great Oeneus' warlike gift, and attacking every quarter alike confronts now these, now those, and with his sword strikes down their glittering weapons; their numbers hinder

them, and their arms impede each other; no strength is in their efforts, but their blows go astray on their own fellows, and falling they are entangled in their own disorder. He awaits their onset, a narrow mark for javelins, and resists them, firm and unshakeable. Not otherwise – if Getic Phlegra be worthy credence – stood Briareus vast in bulk against embattled heaven, contemning on this hand Phoebus' quiver, on that the serpents of stern Pallas, here Mars' Pelethronian pinewood shaft, with point of iron, and yonder the thunderbolt oft changed for new by weary Pyracmon, and yet complaining, though combated in vain by all Olympus, that so many hands were idle; no fainter was he in ardour, with shield outheld now this way, now that, himself retiring, doubling round, and ever and anon darting on their irresolute lines and pressing his vantage, while he pulls forth the many javelins that are stuck quivering all about his shield, an armoury for the hero; and many a bitter wound he suffers, yet none gains entrance to life's secret courses, nor may hope to be deadly. A whirling stroke deals he at raging Deilochus, and bids Phegeus, who threatens attack with axe upraised, go join him beneath the shades, Dircean Gyas too and Lycophontes of Echionian stock. And now, losing heart, they seek each other and count their numbers, nor feel the same zest for blood, but grieve that so large a band is growing few.

[613] Lo! Chromis, of Tyrian Cadmus' seed – him once Phoenician Dryope was carrying in her weighted womb, when revelling bands swept her along forgetful of her burden, and while she was dragging a bull unto thee, O Euhan, grasping its horns, the babe fell forth by stress of undue striving – Chromis at that time, in bold confidence of spears and hide of captured lion, brandished a stout club of knotted pinewood, and taunting cried: "Is one man, ye warriors, one man to go to Argos, boasting of so many slain? Scarce will he gain credence on his return! Come, friends, are there none strong in arm or weapon any more? was this our promise to the king, O Cydon? was it this, O Lampus?" While yet he shouts, the Teumesian cornel-shaft enters his open mouth, nor does his throat stay it; his voice is choked, and the sundered tongue floats in the rush of blood. Awhile he stood, till death poured through his limbs, and he fell, and falling was silent, while his teeth bit upon the spear.

[629] You too, O Thespians, why should I deny you and withhold from honourable renown? Periphas – none of brighter parts than he, or truer devotion – was raising from the ground his brother’s dying frame, his left hand supporting the languid neck, and his right arm about his side; his breast beneath the cuirass is drained by choking sobs of grief, nor can the fastenings restrain the welling tears that flow from his helm, when amid his deep groans a heavy spear shatters his curved ribs from behind him. Issuing from him it pierces his brother also, and with one weapon unites the kindred breasts. The other steadies his swimming eyes, where light still lingered, but beholding his kinsman done to death closes them in darkness. But he, to whom life remains and strength as yet despite his wound, cries: “Such an embrace, such kisses may thy sons give thee!” So fell they, alike in doom, their vow performed alas! in death, and their eyes closed each by the other’s hand.

[645] But Tydeus, straightway attacking, drove Menoetes with shield and spear before him terrified, in hurried backward retreat, till stumbling on the uneven ground he lost his footing; then prays he with both hands spread wide in supplication, and pushes away the spear that presses at his throat: “Spare me, I beseech thee by these star-inwoven shades, by the gods above, and by this night that favours thee: suffer me to bear to Thebes the sad tidings of thy deeds, and in our king’s despite laud thee before our trembling folk; so may our darts fall fruitless and no steel pierce thy breast, and thou return triumphant to thy friend’s desire!” He finished, but the other with countenance unchanged: “Vain tears thou wastest, and thou, if I mistake not, didst promise my head to the cruel prince. Surrender now thy arms and the light of day! Why seek the gaining of thy craven life? ’Tis wars are waiting.” While yet he speaks, the spear-point returns thick-clotted with blood. Thereupon with bitter words he pursues the vanquished: “No triennial night or solemn festival are ye keeping now! no orgies of Cadmus do ye behold, no mothers eager to profane Bacchus! Did ye think ye were carrying fawnskins and brittle wands to your unwarlike music? or were joining the fray that true men know nought of at the sound of Celaenae’s boxwood pipe? Far other carnage is this, far other madness! To death with you, cowards and too few!” So thunders he, but nevertheless his limbs

deny hi, and the tired blood beast heavy on his heart. His arm is raised, but falls in idle blows, his steps are slow, nor can his elbow bear the weight of the buckler changed by the spoils it bears; the cold sweat pours down his panting breast, and his hair and burning visage stream with gory dew and the foul bespattering of dying bodies: even as a lion, who had driven the shepherd far from the meadows and taken his fill of Massylian sheep, when his hunger is sated I in abundance of blood, and his neck and mane are congealed and heavy with corruption, stands faint in the midst of the slaughter, his mouth agape, fordone with gorging; gone is his savage fury, he only snaps in the air his empty jaws, and with hanging tongue licks them clean of the soft wool.

[682] Rich in spoils and bloodshed, he would even have gone to Thebes, and vaunted his triumph before astonished prince and people, hadst not thou, Tritonian maid, deemed worthy of thy counsel the hero, still ardent and all dazed by his deeds: “Scion of proud Oeneus, to whom just now, though far away, we granted victory over Thebes, set now a limit, and strain no more the gods’ undue favour; seek only credence for these toils. Depart, having sued thy fortune to the full.” There yet remained, an unwilling survivor of his comrades’ slaughter, Maeon, the son of Haemon; all this he had foreseen, taught of omens from the air nor deceived by any bird; nor had he feared to deter his chieftain, but the fates deprived his warnings of belief. His doom is to be pitied as a useless life; in terror he receives Tydeus’ stern behest: “Whosoever of the Aonians thou art, whom saved by my bounty from uttermost darkness to-morrow’s Dawn shall yet behold, this message I command thee to carry to thy prince: Raise a mound about your gates, renew your weapons, see to your old and mouldering walls, mind above all to marshall your men in close array and press troop on troop; look now at this field, everywhere smoking from my sword: even so do we make war!”

[704] So speaking, he prepares for thee, O Pallas, of thy deserving a fair guerdon from the gory rout, and in joy collects the booty lying there and surveys all his mighty deeds. Upon a hillock in mid-plain there was an oak tree, long time forgetful of its tender youth, with curving boughs and rude strength of trunk and thick encompassing bark. To this he brings and fastens smooth helmets and armour

pierced by many a stroke, to this he binds swords that his blows have broken short and spears pulled out from limbs yet breathing. Standing then on the heap of arms and bodies he thus begins, while night and the long ridges make echo to his prayer: "Stern goddess, glory and wisdom of thy mighty sire, powerful in war, thou on whose cheeks the terrible splendour of thy grim casque and blood-besprinkled Gorgon glow fierce with rage, - nor did ever Mavors or Bellona with her battle-spear inspire more furious trumpet-blasts - look favourably on this offering, whether thou comest from Pandion's hill to be present at my night of triumph, or whether thou dost turn aside from thy glad dances in Aonian Itone, or hast washed and combed thy hair again in Libyan Triton's waters, whither the fleet axle of thy inviolate mares doth speed thee shouting loud upon thy two-horsed chariot; now do we dedicate to thee the shattered spoils and shapeless armour of heroes. But should I come to my native Parthaonian fields, and Martian Pleuron throw wide her gates for my returning, then in the midst of the city's hills will I consecrate to thee a golden temple, where it may be thy pleasure to look down upon Ionian storms, and where turbulent Achelous with yellow head tossed high disturbs the deep, and leaves the barrier of the Echinades behind. Here will I carve ancestral wars and the awful visages of great-hearted kings, and arms will I hang in the proud shrines, arms that I myself bore home and gained at my own blood's cost, and those that thou, Tritonian maid, shalt give when Thebes is taken. A hundred Calydonian maidens there, votaries of thy virgin altars, shall duly twine thee Attic torches, and weave from thy chaste olive-tree purple fillets set off with snow-white wool; an aged priestess shall tend a never-failing fire upon the hearths, and hold in continual reverence thy mystic sanctities. Thou as of old shalt win in war and in peace rich first-fruits of my labours, nor shall Diana be offended." So prayed he, and set out again for pleasant Argos.

BOOK 3

[1] But not to the perfidious lord of the Aonian palace comes the repose of slumber in the twilight hours, although for the dank stars long travail yet remain till dawn; in his mind care holds vigil and wreaks the penalty for his plotted crime; then fear, gloomiest of augurs in perplexity, broods deeply. “Ah me!” he cries, “why this tarrying?” – for he had deemed the task a light one, and Tydeus an easy prey to so many warriors, nor weighed his valour and spirit against their numbers – “Went they by different rods? Was a company sent from Argos to his succour? Or has news of the deed spread round the neighbouring cities? Chose we too few, O father Gradivus, or men unrenowned in action? But valiant Chromis and Dorylas and the Thespians, a match for these towers of mine, could at my bidding level all Argos with the ground. Nor proof, I ween, against my weapons had he come hither, though his frame were wrought of bronze or solid adamant. For shame, ye cowards, whose efforts fail before a single foe, if indeed ye fought at all!” Thus is he tormented by various gusts of passion, and above all his sword as he spoke in mid assembly, nor openly sated to the full his savage wrath. Now he feels shame of his design, and now repents him of the shame. And like to the appointed helmsman of a Calabrian barque upon Ionian waters (nor does the lack sea-craft, but the Olenian star rising clearer than its wont has beguiled him to leave a friendly haven), when a sudden uproar fills the wintry sky, and all heaven’s confines thunder, and Orion in full might brings low the poles – he himself would fain win the land, and struggles to return, but a strong south wind astern bears him on; then, abandoning his craft, he groans, and heedless now follows the blind waters: even so the Agenorean chieftain upbraids Lucifer, yet lingering in the heavens, and the sun, so slow to rise on the distressed.

[33] Lo! beneath the western rein of Night, her course already turned, and the setting stars, so soon as mighty Tethys had driven forth tardy Hyperion from the Eastern sea, the earth with swaying masses trembled to her foundations, drear sign of ills to come, and Cithaeron was stirred and made his ancient snows to move; then

were the rooftops seen to rise and the sevenfold gates to meet the mountain-ridges. Nor distant was the cause: wroth with his destiny and sad that death had been denied him, the son of Haemon was returning in the cold hour of dawn; not yet is his face plain, but, though indistinct to view, he gave from afar clear signs of dire disaster by wailing and beating his breast; for all his tears had soon been shed. Not otherwise does a bereaved herdsman leave the glade where savage wolves have wrought nocturnal carnage, what time a sudden squall of rain and the windy horns of the winter moon have driven his master's cattle to the woods; light makes the slaughter manifest; he fears to take the new tidings to his lord, and pouring unsightly dust upon his head fills the fields with his lamentations, and hates the vast and silent stalls, while he calls aloud the long roll of his lost bulls.

[53] When the mothers crowding to the threshold of the gates beheld him all alone – ah, horror! – no troop around him or valiant chieftains, they venture not to question him, but raise a cry like unto that last cry when cities are flung open to the victors, or when a ship sinks at sea. As soon as audience at his desire was granted by the hated king: “This hapless life fierce Tydeus doth present thee of all that company, whether the gods have willed it so, or fortune, or, as my anger feels shame to confess, that man's unconquerable might. Scarce to I believe my own report; all have perished, all! Witness night's wandering fires, my comrades' ghosts, and thou, evil omen wherewith I must needs return, no tears nor wiles won me this cruel grace and dishonoured gift of light. But the gods' commands snatched destruction from me, and Atropos, whose pleasure knows no denial, and the fate that long since shut against me this door of death. And now that thou mayst see that my heart is prodigal of life, nor shrinks from final doom: 'tis an unholy war thou hast begun, thou man of blood, no omens will approve thy arms; and while thou endeavourest to banish law, and reign exultant in thy kinsman's exile, the unceasing plaint of a long line of ruined desolate homes, and fifty spirits hovering night and day shall haunt thee with dire terror; for I also delay not.”

[77] Already the fierce king's anger was stirred, and blood lights up his scowling visage. Then Phlegyas and Labdacus, who never dallied

at evil work – the realm’s armed might was in their keeping – prepare unbidden to go and assault him with violence. But already the great-souled seer had bared his blade, and looking now at the truculent tyrant’s face, now at his sword: “Never shalt thou have power upon this blood of mine nor strike the breast that great Tydeus spared; I go, yea exultant, and meet the fate whereof he robbed me; I am borne to the shades of my expectant comrades. As for thee, to the gods and thy brother – “ Even as he spoke, the sword was in his side to the hilt, cutting short his words; he fights against the agony, and with a strong effort doubling himself over the mighty blow sinks down, and the blood, sped by the last gaspings of his life, comes forth now from his mouth, now from the wound. The chiefs are stricken with dismay, the councillors mutter in alarm; but he, with visage set and grim in the death his hand accomplished, is borne to his house by his wife and trusty kinsmen, who have had no long joy of his return. But the mad rage of the impious ruler cannot so long be stayed; he forbids that the corpse be consumed with fire, and in vain defiance bars the peace of the tomb from the unwitting shades.

[99] But thou, so noble in thy death and in thy constancy, thou who wilt never suffer oblivion – such is thy due reward – thou who daredst scorn a monarch to his face, and thus hallow the path of ample freedom: by what strain of sufficing utterance can I add due renown to thy high prowess, augur beloved by the gods? Not in vain did Apollo teach thee all his heavenly lore and deem thee worthy of his laurel, and Dodona mother of forests and the Cirrhaean virgin shall rejoice to keep the folk in suspense while Phoebus holds his peace. And now far removed from Tartarean Avernus go thou and roam Elysian regions, where the sky admits not Ogygian souls, nor a guilty despot’s cruel behests have power; thy raiment and thy limbs endure, left inviolate by gory beasts, and the forest and the birds with sorrowing awe watch o’er thee, as thou liest beneath the naked sky.

[114] But fainting wives and children and ailing parents pour forth from the city walls, and by easy road or trackless region everywhere haste in piteous rivalry, eager to gain the object of their own lament, while in their company go crowded thousands zealous to console; some are burning with desire to see one warrior’s achievement and all the labours of the night. The road is loud with lamentation, and

the fields re-echo the cries of grief. But when they reached the infamous rocks and the accursed wood, as though none had mourned before, nor bitter tears had flowed, once cry of keenest anguish rises, as from one mouth, and the sight of carnage drives the folk to madness; Grief inconsolable stands there with bloody raiment rent and with pierced breast incites the mothers. They search the helmets of the warriors now cold in death, and display the bodies they have found, stretched prostrate alike on stranger and on kinsman. Some steep their hair in the gore, some close up eyes and wash the deep wounds with their tears, others draw out the darts with vainly merciful hand, others gently replace the severed limbs and set the heads again to their shoulders.

[133] But Ide wanders through the thickets and on the open dusty plain – Ide, mighty mother of twin heroes, twinned now in death – with dishevelled hair all flowing, and nails piercing deep her livid cheeks; no more unhappy or pitiable is she, but terrible in her grief; and everywhere by weapons and by bodies she strews on the dire ground her white uncombed locks, and in helpless plight seeks her sons and over every corpse makes lamentation. Not otherwise does the Thessalian witch, whose race's hideous art it is to charm back men to life by spell of song, rejoice in warfare lately ended, and holding high her faggot-torch of ancient cedar nightly haunt the fields, while she turns the slain folk over in their blood, and tries the dead, to see to which corpse she shall give many a message for the world above; the gloomy councils of the shades complain, and black Avernus' sire waxes indignant.

[147] Together they were lying, apart from the rest beneath a rock, fortunate, that one day, one hand had wrought their doom; their wound-pierced breasts are knit fast by the uniting spear. She saw them, and her eyes made passage for the streaming tears: "Is it so ye embrace, my sons, is it so ye kiss, before your mother's eyes? Is it so that Death's cruel cunning at the final hour hath bound you? Which wounds shall I first touch, which face caress? Are ye those strong defenders of your mother, that glory of my womb, whereby I thought to touch the gods, and surpass the mothers of Ogygia in renown? How much better far, how happy in their union are they whose chamber is barren, whose house Lucina never visited at the cry of

travail! Nay, to me my labour hath brought but sorrow. Nor in the broad glare of battle met ye a glorious fate, nor daring deeds ever famous among men did ye seek a death whose story might be told to your unhappy mother, but obscure ye fell and counting but in the tale of deaths; alas! in what streams of blood ye lie, unnoticed and unpraised! I dare not indeed sunder your poor embracing arms, or break the union of so noble a death; go, then, and long abide true brothers, unparted by the final flames, and mingle your loved ashes in the urn!”

[169] No less in the meantime do the rest make lament, each over their own slain: here doth his wife mourn Chthonius, there Astyoche his mother grieves over Pentheus, and tender lads, thy offspring, Phaedimus, have learnt their father’s fate; Marpessa laves Phylleus, her betrothed, and his sisters cleanse the blood-stained Acamas. Then with the iron they lay bare the woods, and lop the antique crown of the neighbouring hill, that knew the secret of the night’s doings and watched the agony; there before the funeral piles, while each clings to the fire he himself has kindled, aged Aletes speaks consoling words to the unhappy company: “Often indeed has our race known sorrow and been racked by the heartless sport of Fate, ay, ever since the Sidonian wanderer cast the iron seed upon the furrows of Aonia, whence came strange growing and fear to the husbandmen of their own fields. But neither when old Cadmus’ palace sank into fiery ashes at cruel Juno’s bidding, nor when hapless Athamas, gaining a deadly fame, came down from the astonished mount, haling, alas! with exultant cries Learchus, nigh a corpse, hath such woe come to Thebes; nor louder then did Phoenician homes re-echo, when weary Agave overcame her frenzy, and trembled at her comrades’ tears. One day alone matched this in doom, and brought disaster in like shape, that day when the impious Tantalid atoned her presumptuous boasting, when she caught up all those bodies whose countless ruin strewn the earth around her, and sought for each its funeral flames. As great then was our people’s woe, and even so from forth the city went young and old and mothers flocking, and cried out their hearts’ bitterness against heaven, and in crowding misery thronged the double pyre at each mighty gate. I too, so I remember, though my years were tender, wept nevertheless, and equalled my parents’ tears.

Yet hose ills were heaven-sent; nor would I more lament that the mad Molossian hounds knew not their master, when he crept forth from his unholy hiding-place to profane, O Delia, thy chaste fountains, nor that the queen, her blood transformed, melted suddenly into a lake. Such was the hard assignment of the Sisters, and so Jove willed it.

[206] “But now by a cruel monarch’s crime have we lost these guiltless citizens, so many chiefs of our land; and not yet hath the fame of the spurned covenant reached Argos, and already we suffer the extremities of war. Alas! what sweat of toil in the thick dust of battle is in store for men and steeds! alas! how high will ye flow, ye rivers, blushing your cruel red! All this will our youth behold, yet green to war; as for me, may I be granted, while it may be, my own funeral pyre, and be laid in my ancestral earth!” So spoke the aged man, and heaped high the crimes of Eteocles, calling him cruel and abominable and doomed to punishment. Whence came this freedom of speech? his end was near, and all his life behind him, and he would fain add glory to late-found death.

[218] All this the creator of the stars had long observed from the summit of the world, and seen the peoples stained by the first bloodshed; then bids he Gradivus straight be called. He having laid waste with slaughter the wild Bistonian folk and Getic towns was driving his chariot in hot haste toward the ethereal heights, flashing the splendour of his lightning-crested helm and angry golden armour, alive with monstrous shapes of terror; heaven’s vault roars thunderous, his shield glows with blood-red light and its emulous orb strikes on the sun from far. When Jupiter saw that he yet panted with his Sarmatic toils, and that all the tempest of war yet swayed his breast: “Even as thou art, my son, even so hie thee through Argos, with thy sword thus dripping, in such a cloud of wrath. Let them cast off the sloth that curbs them, let them hate all and desire but thee, let them in frenzy vow to thee their lives and hands; sweep away the doubting, confound all treaties; thou mayst consume in war – to thee have I granted it – even gods themselves, ay, and the peace of Jove. Already I have sown the seeds of battle: Tydeus, as he returns, brings news of monstrous outrages, the monarch’s crime, the first beginnings of base warfare, the ambush and the treachery, which

with his own weapons he avenged. Add thou credence to his tale. And you, ye gods, scions of my blood, indulge no angry strife, no rivalry to win me by entreaties; thus have the Fates sworn to me, and the dark spindles of the Sisters: this day abides from the beginning of the world ordained for war, these peoples are destined to battle from their birth. But if ye suffer me not to exact solemn vengeance for their sins of old, and to punish their dreadful progeny – I call to witness these everlasting heights, our race's holy shrine, and the Elysian streams that even I hold sacred – with my own arm will I destroy Thebes and shatter her walls to their foundations, and cast out upon the Inachian dwellings her uprooted towers, or else pour down my rain upon them and sweep them into the blue depths, ay, though Juno's self should embrace her hills and temple, and toil amid the chaos."

[253] He spoke, and they were spellbound at this commands. Mortal in mind thou hadst deemed them, so curbed they one and all their voice and spirit. Even as when a long truce of winds has calmed the sea, and the shores lie wrapt in peaceful slumber, indolent summer sets her spell upon forest leaves and clouds, and drives the breezes far; then on lakes and sounding meres the swelling waters sink to rest, and rivers fall silent 'neath the sun's scorching rays.

[260] Exulting with joy at these commands, and glowing yet with his chariot's burning heat, Gradivus leftward swung the reins; soon he was gaining his journey's end and the steeps of heaven, when Venus unafraid stood in his horses' very path; backward they gave place, and e'en now have drooped their thick manes in suppliant wise to earth. Then leaning her bosom on the yoke, and with sidelong tearful glance she beings – meanwhile bowed at their mistress' feet the horses champ the foaming steel: "War even against Thebes, O noble father, war dost thou thyself prepare, and the sword's destruction for all thy race? And does not Harmonia's offspring, nor heaven's festal day of wedlock, nor these tears of mine, thou madman, give thee one moment's pause? Is this thy reward for my misdoing? Is this the guerdon that the Lemnian chains and scandal's tongue and loss of honour have won for me at thy hands? Proceed then as thou wilt; far different service does Vulcan pay me, and even an injured husband's wrath yet does my bidding. If I were to bid him

sweat in endless toil of furnaces and pass unsleeping nights of labour, he would rejoice and work at arms and at new accoutrements, yea, even for thee! Thou – but I essay to move rocks and a heart of bronze by praying! – yet this sole request, this only do I make in anxious fear: why didst thou have me join our beloved daughter to a Tyrian husband in ill-omened wedlock? And boast the while that the Tyrians, of dragon stock and direct lineage of Jove, would win renown in arms and show hearts keen and alive for action? Ah! would rather our maiden had married beneath the Sithonian pole, beyond Boreas and thy Thracians! Have I not suffered wrong enough, that my daughter crawls her length upon the ground, and spews poison on the Illyrian grass? But now her innocent race –”

[291] No longer could the Lord of war endure her tears, but changed his spear to his left hand, and in a moment leapt from the lofty car, and clasping her to his shield hurt her in his embrace, and with loving words thus soothes her: “O thou who art my repose from battle, my sacred joy and all the peace my heart doth know: thou who alone of gods and men canst face my arms unpunished, and check even in mid-slaughter my neighing steeds, and tear this sword from my right hand! neither the marriage-bond of Sidonian Cadmus have I forgotten, nor thy dear loyalty – rejoice not in false accusing! – may I be rather plunged, god though I be, in my uncle’s infernal lakes, and be hunted weaponless to the pale shades! But now ’tis the Fates’ behests and the high Father’s purpose I am bid perform – no fit choice were Vulcan’s arm for such an errand! – and how can I dare face Jove or go about to spurn his spoken decree, Jove, at whose word – such power is his! – I saw of late earth and sky and ocean tremble, and mighty gods, one and all, seek hiding? But, dear one, let not thy heart be sore afraid, I pray thee – these things no Tyrian power can change; and when soon beneath the Tyrian walls both races are making war, I will be present and help our kindred arms. Then with happier mien shalt thou behold me descending in fury upon the Argive fortunes far and wide over the bloody plain; this is my right, nor do the fates forbid it.” So speaking, he drove on through the open air his flaming steeds. No swifter falls upon the earth the anger of Jove, whene’er he stand on snowy Othrys or the cold peak of northern Ossa, and plucks a weapon from the cloud; fast

flies the fiery bolt, bearing the god's stern command, and all heaven, affrighted at its threefold trail, soon threatens with ominous signs the fruitful fields or overwhelms unhappy sailors in the deep.

[325] And now Tydeus on his homeward way passes with weary step through the Danaan lands and down the slopes of green Prosymna; terrible is he to behold: his hair stands thick with dust, from his shoulders filthy sweat drips into his deep wounds, his sleepless eyes are raw and red, and gasping thirst has made his face drawn and sunken; but his spirit, conscious of his deeds, breathes lofty pride. So does a warrior bull return to his well-known pastures, with neck and shoulders and torn dewlaps streaming with his foe's blood and his own; then too doth weary valour swell high, filled with pride, as he looks down upon his breast; his enemy lies on the deserted sand, groaning, dishonoured, and forbids him to feel his cruel pains. Such was he, nor failed he to inflame with hatred the midway towns, all that lie between Asopos and ancient Argos, renewing everywhere and oft the tale, how he had gone on embassy from a Grecian people to claim the realm of exiled Polynices, but had endured violence, night crime, arms, treachery, - such was the Echionian monarch's plighted faith; to his brother he denied his due rights. The folk are swift to believe him; the Lord of Arms inclines them to credit all, and, once welcomed, Rumour redoubles fear.

[345] When he entered within the gates - and it happened that the revered sire Adrastus was himself summoning his chiefs to council - he appears all unexpectedly, and from the very portals of the palace cries aloud: "To arms, to arms, ye men, and thou, most worthy ruler of Lerna, if thou hast the blood of thy brave ancestors, to arms! Natural ties, justice, and reverence for Jove have perished from the world! Better had I gone an envoy to the wild Sauromatae, or the blood-stained warden of the Bebrycian grove. I blame not thy commands, nor regret my errand; glad am I that I went, yea glad, and that my hand has probed the guilt of Thebes. 'Twas war, believe me, war! like a strong tower or city stoutly fortified was I beset, all defenceless and ignorant of my path, treacherously at night, by a picked ambuscade armed to the teeth, ay, but in vain! - they lie there in their own blood, before a city desolated! Now, now is the time to march against the foe, while they are struck by panic and pale with

fear, while they are bringing in the corpses, now, sire, while this right arm is not yet forgotten. I myself even, wearied by the slaughter of those fifty warriors, and bearing the wounds ye see still running with foul gore, beg to set forth upon the instant!”

[365] In alarm the sons of Inachus start up from their seats, and before them all the Cadmean hero runs forward with downcast countenance: “Ah! hated of the gods and guilty that I am! do I see these wounds, myself unharmed? Is this, then, the return thou hadst in store for me, brother? Am I the mark, then, of my kinsman’s weapons? Ah! shameful lust of life! Unhappy I, to have spared my brother so great a crime! Let now your walls at least abide in tranquil peace; let met not, who am still your guest, bring on you such tumult. I now – so hardly has fate dealt with me – how cruel it is, how sad to be torn from children, wife, and country; let no one’s anxious home reproach me, nor mothers fling at me sidelong glances! Gladly will I go, and resolved to die, ay, though my loyal spouse call me back, and her father’s voice once more plead with me. This life of mine I owe to Thebes, to thee, O brother, and to thee, great Tydeus!” Thus with varied speech he tries their hearts and makes dissembling prayer. His complaints stir their wrath, and they wax hot in tearful indignation; spontaneously in every heart, not only of the young, but of those whom age has made cold and slow to action, one purpose rises, to leave desolate their homes, to bring in neighbouring bands, and then to march. But the deep-counselling sire, well-versed in the government of a mighty realm: “Leave that, I pray you, to the gods and to my wisdom to set aright; thy brother shall not reign unpunished, nor are we eager to promise war. But for the present receive this noble son of Oeneus, who comes in triumph from such bloodshed, and let long-sought repose calm his warlike spirit. For our part, grief shall not lack its share of reason.”

[394] Straightway his comrades and anxious wife bestir themselves in haste, all thronging round the way-worn and battle-weary Tydeus. Joyfully in mid-hall he takes his seat, and leans his back against a huge pillar, while Epidaurian Idmon cleanses his wounds with water – Idmon, now swift to ply the knife, now gentler with warm juice of herbs; – he himself, withdrawn into his mind’s deep brooding, tells over the beginning of the deeds of wrath, the words each spoke in

turn, the place of ambush, and the time of secret battle, what chieftains and how great were matched against him, and where most he laboured, and he relates how Maeon was preserved to take the sad tidings. The faithful company, the princes and his wife's sire, are spellbound at his words, and wrath inflames the Tyrian exile.

[407] Far on the sloping margin of the western sea the sinking Sun had unyoked his flaming steeds, and laved their bright manes in the springs of Ocean; to meet him hastens Nereus of the deep and all his company, and the swift-striding Hours, who strip him of his reins and the woven glory of his golden coronet, and relieve his horses' dripping breasts of the hot harness; some turn the well-deserving steeds into the soft pasture, and lean the chariot backward, pole in air. Night then came on, and laid to rest the cares of men and the prowlings of wild beasts, and wrapped the heavens in her dusky shroud, coming to all with kindly influence, but not to thee, Adrastus, nor to the Labdacian prince; for Tydeus was held by generous slumber, steeped in dreams of valiant prowess. And now amid the night-wandering shades the god of battle from on high made to resound with the thunder of arms the Nemean fields and Arcady from end to end, and the height of Taenarum and Therapnae favoured of Apollo, and filled excited hearts with passion for himself. Fury and Wrath make trim his crest, and Panic, his own squire, handles his horses' reins. But Rumour, awake to every sound and girt with empty tidings of tumult, flies before the chariot, sped onward by the winged steeds' panting breath, and with loud whirring shakes out her fluttering plumes; for the charioteer with blood-stained goad urges her to speak, be it truth or falsehood, while threatening from the lofty car the sire with Scythian lance assails the back and tresses of the goddess. Even so their chieftain Neptune drives before him the Winds set free from Aeolus' cell, and speeds them willing over the wide Aegean; in his train Storms and high-piled Tempests, a surly company, clamour about his reins, and Clouds and dark Hurricane torn from earth's rent bowels; wavering and shaken to their foundations the Cyclades stem the blast; even thou, Delos, fearest to be torn away from thy Myconos and Gyaros, and entreatest the protection of thy mighty son.

[440] And now the seventh Dawn with shining face was bearing

bright day to earth and heaven, when the Persean hero first came forth from the private chamber of his palace, distracted by thought of war and the princes' swelling ambition, and perplexed in mind, whether to give sanction and stir anew the rival peoples, or to hold tight the reins of anger and fasten in their sheaths the restless swords. On the one side he is moved by the thought of tranquil peace, on the other by the shame of dishonoured quiet and the hard task of turning a people from war's new glamour; in his doubt this late resolve at last finds favour, to try the mind of prophets and the true presaging of the sacred rites. To thy wisdom, Amphiaraus, is given the charge to read the future, and with thee Melampus, son of Amythaon – an old man now, but fresh in vigour of mind and Phoebus' inspiration – bears company; 'tis doubtful which Apollo more favours, or whose mouth he has sated with fuller draughts of Cirrha's waters. At first they try the gods with entrails and blood of cattle: even then the spotted hearts of sheep and the dread veins threatening disaster portend refusal to the timorous seers. Yet they resolve to go and seek omens in the open sky.

[460] A mount there was, with bold ridge rising far aloft – the dwellers in Lerna call it Apheresas – sacred of yore to Argive folk: for thence they say swift Perseus profaned the clouds with hovering flight, when from the cliff his mother terror-stricken beheld the boy's high-soaring paces, and well nigh sought to follow. Hither the prophets twain, their sacred locks adorned with leaves of the grey olive and their temples decked with snow-white fillets, side by side ascend, when the sun rising bright has melted the cold hoarfrost on the humid fields. And first Oeclides seeks with prayer the favour of the wonted deity: "Almighty Jupiter, – for thou, as we are taught, impartest counsel to swift wings, and dost fill the birds with futurity, and bring to light the omens and causes that lurk in mid-heaven, – not Cirrha can more surely vouchsafe the inspiration of her grotto, nor those Chaonian leaves that are famed to rustle at thy bidding in Molossian groves: through arid Hammon envy, and the Lycian oracle contend in rivalry, and the beast of Nile, and Branchus, whose honour is equal to his sire's, and Pan, whom the rustic dweller in wave-beat Pisa hears nightly beneath the Lycaonian shades, more richly blest in mind is he, for whom thou, O Dictaeon, dost guide the

favouring flights that show thy will.

[482] “Mysterious is the cause, yet of old has this honour been paid to the birds, whether the Founder of the heavenly abode thus ordained, when he wrought the vast expanse of Chaos into fresh seeds of things; or because the birds went forth upon the breezes with bodies transformed and changed from shapes that once were ours; or because they learn truth from the purer heaven, where error comes not, and alight but rarely on the earth: ’tis known to thee, great sire of earth and of the gods. Grant that we may have foreknowledge from the sky of the beginnings of the Argive struggle and the contest that is to come. If it is appointed and the stern Fates are set in this resolve, that the Lernaean spear shall shatter the Echionian gates, show signs thereof and thunder leftward; then let every bird in heaven join in propitious melody of mystic language. If thou dost forbid, then weave delays, and on the right shroud with winged creatures the abyss of the day.” So he spoke, and settled his limbs upon a high rock; then to his prayer he adds more deities and deities unknown, and holds converse with the dark mysteries of the illimitable heaven.

[499] When they had duly parted out the heavens and long scanned the air with keen attention and quick-following vision, at last the Amythaonian seer: “Seest thou not, Amphiaraus, how beneath the breathing sky’s exalted bounds no winged creature travels on a course serene, nor hangs aloft, encircling the pole in liquid flight, nor as it speeds along utters a cry of peaceful import? No dark companion of the tripod, nor fiery bearer of the thunderbolt is here, and fair-haired Minerva’s hooting bird with the hooked beak comes not with better augury; but hawks and vultures exult on high over their airy plunder. Monstrous creatures are flying, and direful birds clamour in the clouds, nocturnal screech-owls cry, and the horned owl with its dismal funeral chant. What celestial portents are we to follow first? must we take these as lords of the sky, O Thymbraean? Even now in frenzy do they tear each other’s faces with crooked talons, and lash the breezes with pinions that seem to smite the bosom, and assail their feathery breasts.”

[516] The other in reply: “Oft indeed, father, have I read omens of various sort from Phoebus. Yea, when in my vigorous youth the

pinewood barque of Thessaly bore me in company of princes half-divine, even then did the chieftains listen spellbound to my chant of what should befall us on land and sea, nor Mopsus' self was hearkened to more often by Jason in perplexity than my presagings of the future. But never ere this day felt I such terror, or observed prodigies so dire in heaven; yet happenings more awful are in store. Look hither then: in this clear region of profound aether numberless swans have marshalled their ranks, whether Boreas has driven them from the Strymonian North, or the benignant fostering air of placid Nile recalls them. They have stopped their flight: these deem thou in fancy to be Thebes, for they hold themselves motionless in a circle and are silent and at peace, as though enclosed by walls and rampart. But lo! a more valiant cohort advances through the empty air; a tawny line of seven birds that bear the weapons of Jupiter supreme I see, an exultant band; suppose that in these thou hast the Inachian princes. They have flung themselves on the circle of the snow-white flock, and open wide their hooked beaks for fresh slaughter, and with talons unsheathed press on to the attack. Seest thou the breezes dripping unwonted blood, and the air raining feathers? What sudden fierce anger of unpropitious Jove is driving the victors to destruction? This one soaring to the height is consumed by the sun's quick fire, and lays down his proud spirit, that other, bold in pursuit of mightier birds, you let sink, ye still frail pinions. This one fails grappling with his foe, that one is swept backward by the rout and leaves his company to their fate. This one a rain-cloud overwhelms, another in death devours his winged foe yet living; blood bespatters the hollow clouds." "What mean those secret tears?" "Him yonder falling, reverend Melampus, him I know full well!"

[547] Affrighted thus by the future's dire import, and having suffered all under a sure image of things to come, the seers are held by terror; it repents them that they have broken in upon the councils of the flying birds, and forced their will upon a forbidding heaven; though heard, they hate the gods that heard them. Whence first arose among unhappy mortals throughout the world that sickly craving for the future? Sent by heaven, wouldst thou call it? Or is it we ourselves, a race insatiable, never content to abide on knowledge gained, that search out the day of our birth and the scene of our

life's ending, what the kindly Father of the gods is thinking, or iron-hearted Clotho? Hence comes it that entrails occupy us, and the airy speech of birds, and the moon's numbered seeds, and Thessalia's horrid rites. But that earlier golden age of our forefathers, and the races born of rock or oak were not thus minded; their only passion was to gain the mastery of the woods and the soil by might of hand; it was forbidden to man to know what to-morrow's day would bring. We, a depraved and pitiable crowd, probe deep the counsels of the gods; hence come wrath and anxious fear, hence crime and treachery, and importunity in prayer.

[566] Therefore the priest tears from his brow the fillets and wreaths condemned of heaven, and all unhonoured, his chaplet cast away, returns from the hated mount; already war is at hand, and the sound of trumpets, and in his heart he hears the clamour of absent Thebes. Not sight of populace, nor trusted converse with the monarch, nor council of chieftains can he bear, but hidden in his dark chamber refuses to make known the doings of the gods; thee, Melampus, shame and thy own cares keep in thy country region. For twelve days he speaks not, and holds people and leaders in long-drawn suspense. And now tumultuous grow the Thunderer's high behests, and lay waste of men both fields and ancient towns; on every side the war-god sweeps countless troops before him; gladly do they leave their homes and beloved wives and babes that wail upon the threshold; with such power hath the god assailed their frenzied hearts. Eager are they to tear away the weapons from their fathers' doorposts and the chariots made fast in the inmost shrines of the gods; then they refashion for cruel wounds the spears that rotting rust has worn, and the swords that stick in their scabbards from neglect, and on the grindstone force them to be young once more. Some try shapely helms and the brazen mail of mighty corselets, and fit to their breasts tunics that creak with the mouldering iron, others bend Gortynian bows; in greedy furnaces scythes, ploughs and harrows and curved mattocks glow fiercely red. Nor are they ashamed to cut strong spear-shafts from sacred trees, or to make a covering for their shields from the worn-out ox. They rush to Argos, and at the doors of the despondent king clamour with heart and voice for war, for war! And the shout goes up like the roar of the Tyrrhenian surge, or when

Enceladus tries to shift his side: above, the fiery mountain thunders from its caves, its peak o'erflows and Pelorus' flood is narrowed, and the sundered land hopes to return once more.

[598] Then Capaneus, impelled by war's overmastering passion, with swelling heart that had long thought scorn of lingering peace, - nobility of ancient blood had he in full measure, but, surpassing the prowess of his sires, he had long despised the gods; impatient too was he of justice, and lavish of his life, did wrath but urge him - even as a dweller in Pholoe's dark forests, or one who might stand equal among Aetnaean brethren, clamours before they portals, Amphiarus, amid a crowd of chieftains and yelling folk: "What shameful cowardice is this, O sons of Inachus, and ye Achaeans of kindred blood? Before on citizen's lowly door - for shame! - do we hang irresolute, so vast a host, iron-girt and of ready valour? Not if beneath Cirrha's caverned height he, whoe'er he is - Apollo cowards and rumour account him - were to bellow from the deep seclusion of his crazy grotto, could I wait for the pale virgin to announce the solemn riddlings! Valour and the good sword in my hand are the gods I worship! And now let this priest with his timid trickery come out, on this very day I shall make trial, what wondrous power there is in birds."

[618] The Achaean mob raise joyful outcry, and encourage his madness. At last Oeclides, driven to rush forth among them: "'Tis not the unrestrained clamour of a blasphemous stripling nor the fear of his taunts that draws me from my darkness, mad though his threatenings be; far different are the tumultuous cares that vex me, far other is the destiny that brings my final doom, nor may mortal arms have power upon me. But now my love for you and Phoebus' strong inspiration compel me to speak forth my oracle; sadly to you will I reveal what is to come, yea all that lies beyond, - to you, I say, for to thee, thou madman, nought may be foreshown, concerning thee only is our lord Apollo silent. Whither, unhappy ones, whither are ye rushing to war, though fate and heaven would bar the way? What Furies' lash drives you blindly on? Are ye so weary of life? Is Argos grown so hateful? Hath home no sweetness? Heed ye not the omens? Why did ye force me to climb with trembling step to the secret heights of Perseus' mount, and break into the council of the heavenly

ones? I could have remained in ignorance with you, of what hap awaits our arms, when cometh the black day of doom, what heralds the common fate – and mine! I call to witness the mysteries of the universe I questioned, and the speech of birds, and thee, Thymbraean, never before so pitiless to my supplication, what presagings of the future I endured: I saw a mighty ruin foreshown, I saw gods and men dismayed and Megaera exultant and Lachesis with crumbling thread laying the ages waste. Cast away your arms! behold! heaven, yea, heaven withstands your frenzy! Miserable men, what glory is there in drenching Aonia and the fallows of dire Cadmus with the blood of vanquished foes? But why do I warn in vain? why do I repel a fate foredoomed? I go to meet it – “ Here ceased the prophet and groaned.

[648] Capaneus yet once more: “To thyself alone utter thy raving auguries, that thou mayst live empty and inglorious years, nor ever the Tyrrhenian clangour resound about thy temples. But why dost thou delay the nobler vows of heroes? Is it forsooth that thou in slothful ease mayst lord it over thy silly birds and thy son and home and women’s chambers, that we are to shroud in silence the stricken breast of peerless Tydeus and the armed breach of covenant? Dost thou forbid the Greeks to make fierce war? then go thyself an envoy to our Sidonian foe: these chaplets will assure thee peace. Can thy words really coax from the void of heaven the causes and hidden names of things? Pitiably in sooth are the gods, if they take heed of enchantments and prayers of men! Why doest thou affright these sluggish minds? Fear first created gods in the world! Rave therefore now thy fill in safety; but when the first trumpets bray, and we are drinking from our helms the hostile waters of Dirce and Ismenos, come not then, I warn thee, in my path, when I am yearning for the bugle and the fray, nor by veins or view of winged fowl put off the day of battle; far away then will be thy soft fillet and he crazy alarms of Phoebus: then shall I be augur, and with me all who are ready to be mad in fight.”

[669] Again out thunders a vast approving shout, and rolls uproarious to the stars. Even as a swift torrent, drawing strength from the winds of spring and from the melting of the frozen cold upon the mountains, when o’er vainly hindering obstacles it bursts its way out

upon the plain, then homesteads, crops, cattle, and men roar mingled in the whirling flood, until its fury is checked and baffled by a rising hill, and it finds itself embanked by mighty mounds: even so interposing night set an end to the chieftains' quarrel.

[679] But Argia, no longer able to bear with calm mind her lord's distress, and pitying the grief wherein she shared, even as she was, her face long marred by tearing of her hair and marks of weeping, went to the high palace of her reverend father in the last watch of night ere dawn, when Arctos' wagon sole-surviving envies the ocean-fleeing stars, and bore in her bosom to his loving grandsire the babe Thersander. And when she had entered the door and was clasped in her mighty parent's arms: "Why I seek thy threshold at night, tearful and suppliant, without my sorrowful spouse, thou knowest, father, even were I slow to tell the cause. But I swear by the sacred laws of wedlock and by thee, O sire, 'tis not he that bids me, but my wakeful anguish. For ever since Hymen at the first and unpropitious Juno raised the ill-omened torch, my sleep has been disturbed by my consort's tears and moans. Not if I were a tigress bristling fierce, not if my heart were rougher than rocks on the sea-strand, could I bear it; thou only canst help me, thou hast the sovereign power to heal. Grant war, O father; look on the low estate of thy fallen son-in-law, look, father, here on the exile's babe; what shame for his birth will he one day feel! Ah! where is that first bond of friendship, and the hands joined beneath heaven's blessing? This surely is he whom the fates assigned, of whom Apollo spake; no hidden fires of Venus have I in secret cherished, no guilty wedlock; thy reverend commands, thy counsel have I ever esteemed. Now with what cruelty should I despise his doleful plaint? Thou knowest not, good father, thou knowest not, what deep affection a husband's misery implants in a loyal bride. And now in sadness I crave this hard and joyless privilege of fear and grief; but when the sorrowful day interrupts our kisses, when the clarions blare their hoarse commands to the departing host, and your faces glitter in their stern casques of gold, ah! then, dear father, mayhap I shall crave a different boon."

[711] Her sire, with kisses on her tear-bedewed face: "Never, my daughter, could I blame these complaints of thine; have no fears,

praiseworthy is thy request, deserving no refusal. But much the gods give me to ponder – nor cease thou to hope for what thou urgest – much my own fears and this realm’s uncertain governance. In due measure shall thy prayers be answered, and thou shalt not complain thy tears were fruitless. Console thy husband and hold not just tarrying cruel waste of time; ’tis the greatness of the enterprise that brings delay. So gain we advantage for the war.” As thus he spoke, the new-born light admonished him, and his grave cares bade him arise.

BOOK 4

[1] Thrice had Phoebus loosened stark winter with the Zephyrs, and was constraining the scanty day to move in its vernal path with a longer course, when counsellings yielded to the shock of fate, and pitiful war was given at last an ample field. First from the Larissaeon height Bellona displayed her ruddy torch, and with right arm drove the spear-shaft whirling; hissing, it flew through the clear heaven, and stood fixed on the high rampart of Aonian Dirce. Then to the camp she goes and, mingling with the heroes that glittered in gold and steel, shouts like a squadron; she gives swords to hurrying warriors, claps their steeds and beckons gateward; the brave anticipate her promptings and even the timid are inspired to short-lived valour.

[13] The appointed day had come. A mighty herd falls in due sacrifice to the Thunderer and to Mars; the priest, cheered by no favouring entrails, pales and feigns hope before the host. And now around their kinsmen sons and brides and fathers pour mingled, and from the summit of the gates would fain delay them. No stint is there of tears: bedewed are the shields and helmet-crests of those who make their sad farewell, and the household, the object of their sighs, clings to every weapon; they delight to find entrance for their kisses through the closed visors, and to draw down the grim helmet-peaks to their embrace. They who of late took pleasure in the sword, yea in death itself, now groan and shake with sobbing, their warlike temper broken. Even so, when men are about to go perchance on some long voyage o'er the sea, and already the south winds are in the sails and the anchor rises from its torn bed, the loving band clings fast and enlaces their necks with eager arms, and their streaming eyes are dimmed, some with kisses, some with the sea's vast haze; at last they are left behind, yet stand upon a rock, and rejoice to follow the swift-flying canvas with their gaze, while they grieve that their native breezes are blowing ever stronger; yet still they stand, and beckon to the ship from the well-known rock.

[32] Now, Fame of olden time, and thou, dark Antiquity of the world, whose care it is to remember princes and to make immortal

the story of their lives, recount the warriors, and thou, Calliope, queen of the groves of song, uplift thy lyre and begin the tale, what troops of arms Gradivus roused, what cities he laid waste of their peoples; for to none comes loftier inspiration from the fountain's draught. The king Adrastus, sick with misgiving beneath the burden of his cares, and drawing nigh his life's departure, walked scarce of his own will amongst the applauding people, content to be girt but with his sword; attendants bear his arms behind him, his charioteer tends the swift horses close by the city gates, and already is Arion struggling against the yoke. To support their king Larissa and high Prosymna arm their men, and Midea, fitter home of herds, and Phlius rich in cattle, and Neris that quails at Charadros foaming down his valley's length, Cleonae with her piled mass of towers, and Thyrea destined one day to reap a harvest of Spartan gore.

[49] To them are joined men who remember the king sent thence in early days, men who cultivate the rocky heights of Drepanum and olive-bearing Sicyon, and whom Strangilla laves with lazy, silent stream, and Elisson winding through his curving banks. An awful privilege has that river: it cleanses, so 'tis said, with its austere waters the Stygian Eumenides; here are they wont to dip their faces and the horned snakes that gasp from drinking Phlegethon, whether they have ruined Thracian homes or Mycenae's impious palace or Cadmus' dwelling; the river itself flees from them as they bathe, and its pools grow livid with countless poisons. Ephyre, who consoled the weeping Ino, lends her company, and Cenchreae, where the river, struck by the Gorgon-quelling steed, owns the presence of the bard, and where Isthmos lies athwart the deep and wards off from the land the sloping seas. This troop, in all three thousand, followed in Adrastus' train exultant; some bore pikes in their hand, some stakes long hardened in the fire – for neither blood nor custom are shared by all their bands – some are wont to whirl firmly-woven slings and gird the air with a trackless circle. The king himself moves venerable alike in years and rank: as a tall bull goes amid the pastures he has long possessed, his neck and shoulders now drooping and void of strength, yet the leader still; no courage have the steers to try him in the fight, for they see the horns that many a blow has broken, and huge scars of wounds upon his breast.

[74] Next to the aged Adrastus his Dircaean son-in-law brings forth his standards; to his cause the war does service, to him the whole army lends it martial ire, for him even from his native home have men come gladly, whether those whom his exile moves, and in whom loyalty has stood sure strengthened by adversity, or those in whom desire to change their ruler is uppermost, many again whom the better cause makes favourable to his complaint. Moreover, his father-in-law had given him Aegion and Arene to rule, and all the wealth that Troezen, famous for Theseus, brings, lest with scant following he should go inglorious, and feel the loss of his native honours. The hero wears the same dress and carries the same arms as on that winter's night, when he owed the duty of a guest: a Teumesian lion covers his back, and the twin points of javelins glitter, while by his side a cruel Sphinx rises stiff on his wound-dealing sword. Already in his hopes and prayers he is master of his realm, and holds his mother and faithful sisters in his embrace, yet he looks back upon distraught Argia as she stands on the high tower against the sky; she draws back to herself her husband's eyes and thoughts, and drives pleasant Thebes from out his mind.

[93] Lo! in the midst Tydeus flashing bright leads on his native squadrons, glad already and hale of limb, so soon as the first bugles sounded: even so a slippery snake raises itself from the deep earth at the coaxing breath of the vernal sun, freed of its eld and the unsightly years put off, and gleams, a bright green danger, in the lush herbage; unhappy the husbandman who meets its gaping mouth in the grass, and spoils its fangs of their new venom! To him also the rumour of war brings present help of warriors from the Aetolian cities; rocky Pylene heard the tidings, and Pleuron of Meleager, wept for by his sister-birds; steep Calydon, and Olenos whose Jove doth challenge Ide, and Chalcis, welcome haven from Ionian billows, and the river whose face the athlete Hercules did mar: even yet scarce dares he raise his stricken visage from the waters' depth, but mourns with head sunk far below in his green cave, while the river-banks pant and sicken with dust. All these defend their bodies with bronze-bound targes, and bear fierce halberds in their hands, while native Mars stands erect upon their helms. Chosen youths surround the great-hearted son of Oeneus, high-spirited for battle and in all the glory of

his well-known scars; no meaner he in threatening ire than Polynices;
'tis doubtful even for whom the war is waged.

[116] But mightier comes thereon the Dorian array new-armed, they whose numerous ploughs turn up thy banks, Lyrceus, and thy shores, Inachus, prince of Achaeian streams – for no more tempestuous torrent flows forth from Persean land, when he has drunk deep of Taurus or the watery Pleiades, foaming high and swollen with Jove, his daughter's lover – they too whom swift Asterion encircles and Erasinus sweeping on his flood Dryopian harvests, and they who tame the fields of Epidaurus – favourable to Iacchus are those hill-sides, but they give denial to Ceres of Henna – desolate Dyme sends aid, and Neleian Pylos her swarming squadrons; not yet renowned was Pylos, and Nestor was as yet in the prime of his second age, but would not join a host doomed to perish. These doth tall Hippomedon excite and teach the love of glorious valour; on his head a brazen helm doth shake with triple tier of snow-white plume, beneath his armour iron mail fits close upon his flanks, his shoulders and breast a wide flaming circle covers, whereon the night of Danaus lives in the gold handiwork: the fifty guilty chambers blaze with Furies' murky torch, the sire himself on the blood-stained threshold praises the crime and views the swords. A Nemean steed in terror of the fight bears the hero from the citadel of Pallas, and fills the fields with the huge flying shadow, and he long trail of dust rises upon the plain. Not otherwise, crashing through the forests with shoulders and either breast, does twy-formed Hylaeus speed headlong from his mountain cave; Ossa trembles at his going, and beasts and cattle fall in terror; yea, even his brethren are affrighted, till with a great leap he plunges into the waters of Peneus, and with thwarting bulk dams back the mighty flood.

[144] Who could describe in mortal speech that numerous armament, its peoples and their valiant might? Ancient Tiryns is roused by her own god to arms, not barren of brave men, nor degenerate from her tremendous son's renown, but desolate and her day of fortune past, nor hath she the power that wealth can give; the scanty dweller in her empty fields points out the towers raised by the sweat of Cyclopean brows. Yet she sends three hundred manly hearts, a company undisciplined for war, without javelin-thongs or

the surly gleam of swords; on their heads and shoulders the tawny spoil of lions, their tribe's adornment, a pinewood stake their weapon, and shafts crammed tight in inexhaustible quivers. They sing the paean of Hercules and the world swept clear of monsters: the god listens from afar on leafy Oeta. Nemea gives them comrades and all the might that he sacred vineyards of Cleonaeon Molorchus summon to war. Well known is the glory of that cottage; pictured upon its willow doors are the arms of the god who was its guest, and in the humble field 'tis shown where he laid his club, and under what holm-oak he reposed his limbs at ease, and where yet the ground bears traces of his lying.

[165] But Capaneus, on foot and looking down by a whole head's height upon the host, wields the burden of four hides torn from the backs of untamed steers and stiffened above with a covering of massy bronze; there lies the Hydra with triple-branching crown, lately slain and foul in death: part, embossed in silver, glitters fierce with moving snakes, part by a cunning device is sunken, and grows dark in the death agony against the tawny gold; around, in dark-blue steel runs the torpid stream of Lerna. His long flanks and spacious breast are guarded by a corselet woven of iron threads innumerable, a work inspiring terror, no mother's task; a giant rises from the summit of his flashing helm; his spear, that he alone can throw, is a cypress standing stripped of leaves and pointed with iron. Assigned in fealty to him are they whom fertile Amphigenia nourishes, and Messene's plain and mountainous Ithome, Thryon and Aepy high-piled on mountain-tops, Helos too and Pteleon and Dorion that bewails the Getic bard: here Thamyris made bold to surpass in song the skilled daughters of Aonia, but doomed to a life of silence fell on the instant mute with voice and harp alike – who may despise deities met face to face? – for that he knew not what it was to strive with Phoebus, nor how the hanging Satyr brought Celaenae fame.

[187] And now even the fate-foretelling augur's resolve begins to weaken under strong assault; he saw indeed what should befall and the dread signs thereof, but Atropos herself had made violent attack upon his doubting will, and overwhelmed the god within him, nor is wifely treachery absent, and already the house sparkles with forbidden gold. From that gold died the fates bode destruction to the

Argive seer, yea, and she knew it – ah, impious crime! – but the perfidious wife would fain barter her husband for a gift, and yearns to gain the spoils of the princess Argia, and to excel her in the stolen finery. She not unwilling – for she sees that the spirit of the princes and the resolve of war must fail, should not the foreseeing hero join their enterprise – herself put off from her bosom the fatal ornament of her beloved Polynices, nor grieved therat, but saith moreover: “No fit times these to deck myself in shining jewelry, nor without thee let me take delight in adorning my hapless beauty; enough to beguile my doubts and fears with the solace of my maidens, and trail my unkempt tresses at the altars. Shall I – oh! thought unspeakable! – shall I wear rich Harmonia’s dower of gold, while thou art shut within thy threatening helmet, and dost clang in arms of steel? More fitly mayhap will heaven grant me that boon, and I outdo the Argolic brides in apparel, when I am queen indeed, and must fill the temples with votive choirs, upon thy safe return. Now let her put it on who desires it, and can rejoice while her husband is at war.” Thus the fatal gold made entry to the chambers of Eriphyle, and set in motion the beginnings of great crimes, and Tisiphone laughed loud, exulting in what should come to pass.

[214] Aloft behind Taenarian steeds, whom Cyllarus unknown to Castor had begotten on mares of meaner stock, he makes earth tremble; the adornment of Parnassian wool betrays the prophet, sprays of olive wreath his helmet, and the white fillet intertwines the scarlet crest. He handles at once his weapons and the reins held tight upon the yoke. On either side there is a shelter from darts, and an iron forest trembles on his chariot; far seen he stands, conspicuous and terrible with stern spear, and flashes the conquered Python on his shield. Amyclae, Apollo’s town, bears his car company, and the bands of Pylos, and Malea shunned by doubting keels, and Caryae skilled to raise the hymn that wins Diana’s applause, and Pharis and Cytherean Messe, mother of doves, the phalanx of Taygetus, and the hardy troop of swan-nurturing Eurotas. The Arcadian god himself trains them in the dust of combat, and implants in them the ways of naked valour and warlike temper; hence dauntless courage and the welcome consecration of a glorious death. Their parents rejoice in their children’s fate and urge them on to die; and while the whole

band of youths makes lamentation, the mother is content with the wreath that crowns the victim. They hold the reins and two javelins with thong attached, bard are their mighty shoulders, from which a rough cloak hangs; a Ledaean crest is on their helms. Not these alone, Amphiaraus, are in thy service: the slopes of Elis swell they array, and low-lying Pisa's folk, who swim thy waters, yellow Alpheus, thou who farest to Sicanian lands, yet art never tainted by so long a passage through the deep. Countless chariots vex their crumbling fields far and wide, their beasts are broken to war: that glory of the race endures even from the impious ways and broken axles of Oenomaus; the champed bits foam between the jaws, and the white spume bedews the churned earth.

[246] Thou too, Parthenopaeus, unknown to thy mother – unschooled alas! in arms, such lure hath young ambition – speedest onward thy Parrhasian cohorts. Thy warlike parent, so it chanced – not otherwise could the boy have left her – was bringing peace with her bow to distant glades, and the farther slopes of cool Lycaeus. No fairer face was there of any marching to the grim hazard of war, none winds such favour for pre-eminent beauty; nor lacks he courage, so he but come to sterner years. What forest-queens and spirits enshrined in rivers, what nymphs of the glade hath he not fired with consuming passion? Diana herself, when she saw the boy beneath the shade of Maenalus steeping youthful o'er the grass, forgave her comrade, so they say, and with her own hand fitted to his shoulders the Dictean shafts and Amyclean quiver. Smitten by dauntless love of war he dashes to the front, burning to hear the clash of arms and bray of trumpets, to soil his fair hair with the dust of battle, and to ride home on a foeman's captive steed. He is weary of the woodlands, and ashamed that he knows not the arrows' baneful boast of human blood. Foremost he shines, ablaze with purple and gold, his streaming cloak furrowed by Iberian cords, and his innocent shield adorned with his mother's Calydonian battles; fierce sounds the bow at his left side, and on his back, plumed with feathery shafts, rattles the quiver set with pale electrum and brilliant Eastern jasper, full of Cydonian arrows. His charger, accustomed to outstrip the flying stags, was covered with two lynxes' hides, and marvelled at his armed master's heavier weight; him he loftily bestrode, comely to

look upon from the pleasant flush of youth upon his cheeks.

[275] To him the Arcadians an ancient people, older than the moon and stars, give trusty cohorts; they were born, 'tis said, of the hard trunks of forest trees, when the wondering earth first bore the print of feet; not yet were fields or houses or cities or ordinance of marriage: oaks and laurels suffered rude child-birth, and the shady mountain-ash peopled the earth, and the young babe fell from the pregnant ash-tree's womb. 'Tis said that, struck with terror at the change from light to murky darkness, they followed far the setting Titan, despairing of the day. The husbandmen grow few on high Maenalus, the forests of Parthenius are deserted, Rhipe and Stratie and windy Enispe give their troops to aid the war. Neither Tegea nor Cyllene blest by the winged god stand idle, nor Alea, woodland shrine of Minerva, nor swift Clitor, nor Ladon, almost, O Pythian, the father of thy bride; nor yet Lampia with her shining snow-white ridges, nor Pheneos, believed to send down Styx to swarthy Dis. Azan, that can rival the howling mobs of Ida, came, and the Parrhasian leaders, and the Nonacrian countryside, wherein the Thunderer quiverclad took delight, and furnished laughter for you, ye Loves, and Orchomenos rich in cattle, and Cynosura abounding in wild beasts. The same ardour lays bare the fields of Aepytus and lofty Psophis and the mountains famed for Hercules' might, Erymanthos home of monsters, and Stymphalos with its clanging bronze. All Arcadians these, one race of men, but sundered by differing customs: these bend back Paphian myrtle-saplings, and practise warfare with pastoral staves; some have bows, some pikes for weapons; some cover their hair with helmets, while that one keeps the fashion of the Arcadian hat, and another makes his head terrible with the jaws of a Lycaonian she-bear. This warlike gathering of hearts sworn true to Mars Mycenae, neighbour though she was, helped with no soldiery; for then was the deadly banquet and the sun's midday withdrawing, and there, too, was a feud of warring brothers.

[309] And now the tidings had filled the ears of Atalanta, that her son was going a captain to the war, and rousing all Arcadia; her steps faltered and the darts fell by her side; swifter than the winged wind she fled from the woodland, o'er rocks and brimming rivers that would stay her, just as she was, with snatched-up raiment and fair

hair streaming behind her on the breeze; even as a tigress, bereft of her cubs, fiercely tracks the horse of him that robbed her. When she halted and pressed her bosom on the reins that met her (he pale, with eyes downcast): “Whence comes this mad desire, my son, whence this reckless valour in thy young breast? Canst thou drill men to war, canst thou bear the burdens of Mars and go among the sword-bearing companies? Yet would that thou wert able! Lately I paled to see thee plying the hunting-lance in close conflict with a struggling boar, forced back upon bent knee and almost fallen, and had I not drawn my bow and sped an arrow, where now would be thy wars? Nought will my shafts avail thee, nor my shapely bows, nor this black-spotted steed in whom thou trustest; mighty are the endeavours to which thou hastenest, and thou a boy scarce ripe for the embraces of Dryads or the passions of Erymanthian Nymphs. Omens tell true: I wondered why Diana’s temple seemed to me of late to tremble, and the goddess herself to frown upon me, and why the votive spoils fell from her roof; this it was that made my archery slack and my hands to falter and never to strike sure. Nay, wait till thy prowess be greater, thy years more firm, till the shadow come upon thy rosy cheeks and my likeness fade from thy face. Then I myself will give thee the battles and the sword for which thou dost burn, and no mother’s tears shall call thee back. Now take back thy weapons home! But you, will you suffer him to go to war, ye Arcadians, O born assuredly of rock and oak?” More would she fain entreat; her son and the chieftains thronging round console her and lessen her fears, and already the bugles’ horrid signal blares forth. She cannot loose her son from her loving embrace, and commends him earnestly to his leader Adrastus.

[345] But in another region the Martian folk of Cadmus, dismayed by the madness of the king and terrified by news that is grave indeed – for ’tis spread abroad how Argos is making descent in force – tardily in truth for shame of the monarch and his cause, nevertheless prepare for war. None rush to draw the sword, or take pleasure in covering their shoulders with their father’s shield or making trim the harness of wing-footed horses, delights such as war affords; despondent, without resolve or warlike temper, they vouchsafe a timorous aid; this one bewails a loving parent in his evil case,

another his wife's pleasant youth and the hapless babes ripening in her womb. In none does the war-god wax hot; even the walls crumbling with age-long neglect and Amphion's mighty towers lay bare their worn and ancient sides, and a mean and unresponsive toil repairs those parapets once raised to heaven by the inspired harp. Yet the Boeotian cities are moved by the avenging lust of battle, and are stirred in behalf of their kindred race rather than to aid the unjust king. Like is he to a wolf that has forced an entrance to a rich fold of sheep, and now, his breast all clotted with foul corruption and his gaping bristly mouth unsightly with blood-stained wool, hies him from the pens, turning this way and that his troubled gaze, should the angry shepherds find out their loss and follow in pursuit, and flees all conscious of his bold deed.

[369] Disturbing Rumour heaps panic upon panic: one says that scattered cavalry of Lerna wander upon Asopus' bank, one tells of thy capture, Cithaeron of the revels, another reports Teumesos taken, and Plataeae's watch-fires burning through the darkness of the night. And to whom throughout the land hath not knowledge, yea sight been granted, of the Tyrian walls a-sweat and Dirce stained with blood, of monstrous births and Sphinx yet once more speaking from her rock? And to crown all, a new fear confounds their anxious hearts: of a sudden the queen of the woodland dance is seized by frenzy, and scattering the sacred baskets runs down to the plain from the Ogygian heights, and bloodshot-eyed waves fiercely to and fro a triple pine-torch, and fills the alarmed city with wild distracted cries: "Almighty Sire of Nysa, who long hast ceased to love thy ancestral nation, swift-borne beneath the frozen North thou art shaking warlike Ismara now with thine iron-pointed thyrsus, and bidding the vine-groves creep over Lycurgus' realm, or thou art rushing in mad and flaring triumph by swelling Ganges and the farthest confines of red Tethys and the Eastern lands, or issuing golden from the springs of Hermus. But we, thy progeny, have laid aside our country's weapons that do thee festal honour, and have our portion of war and tears, and terror and kindred crime, the cruel burdens of this unrighteous reign. Rather, O Bacchus, take and set me among the eternal frosts, beyond Caucasus that rings with the war-cry of the Amazons, than that I should tell the horrors of our rulers and their unnatural brood. Lo!

thou drivest me! far different was the frenzy I vowed to thee, O Bacchus: I behold two similar bulls engage, alike in honour and sharing one inherited blood; with butting foreheads and lofty horns they close in fierce struggle, and perish in the violence of their mutual wrath. Thou art the villain! Do thou give way, who wrongfully seekest all alone to hold ancestral pastures and the hills ye both do own. Ah! miserable and wicked! such bloodshed have your wars cost you, and another champion is master of your meadow.” So spake she, and as the god withdrew his presence fell mute with ice-cold face.

[406] But the king, affrighted by the portent and a prey to various terrors, in sick despair – such is the way of those who fear they know not what – seeks aid from the long-lived seer and the clear-sighted blindness of Tiresias. He replies that heaven shows not its will so clearly by lavish slaughter of steers or nimble feathered wing or the truthful leap of entrails, not by means of garlanded tripod or star-determined numbers, or by the smoke that hovers about the altar’s frankincense, as by the ghosts called up from Death’s stern barrier; then he prepares the rites of Lethe, and makes ready beforehand to evoke the monarch sunk below the confines of Ismenos where it mingles with the deep, and makes purgation all around with the torn entrails of sheep and the strong smell of sulphur, and with fresh herbs and the long mutterings of prayers.

[419] There stands a wood, enduring of time, and strong and erect in age, with foliage aye unshorn nor pierced by any suns; no cold of winter has injured it, nor has the South wind power thereon nor Boreas swooping down from the Getic Bear. Beneath is sheltered quiet, and a vague shuddering awe guards the silence, and the phantom of the banished light gleams pale and ominous. Nor do the shadows lack a divine power: Latonia’s haunting presence is added to the grove; her effigies wrought in pine or cedar and wood or very tree are hidden in the hallowed gloom of the forest. Her arrows whistle unseen through the wood, her hounds bay nightly, when she flies from her uncle’s threshold and resumes afresh Diana’s kindlier shape. Or when she is weary from her ranging on the hills, and the sun high in heaven invites sweet slumber, here doth she rest with head flung back carelessly on her quiver, while all her spears stand

fixed in the earth around. Outside, of vast extent, stretches the Martian plain, the field that bore its harvest to Cadmus. Hardy was he who first after the kindred warfare and the crime of those same furrows dared with the ploughshare till the soil and upturned the blood-soaked meads; even yet the accursed earth breathes mighty tumults at midday and in the lonely night's dim shadows, when the black sons of earth arise to phantom combat: with trembling limbs the husbandman flees and leaves the field unfinished, and his oxen hie them to their stalls, distraught.

[443] Here the aged seer – for well suited is the ground to Stygian rites, and the soil, rich with living gore, delighted him – bids dark-fleeced sheep and black oxen be set before him, all the finest heads that the herds can show; Dirce and gloomy Cithaeron wailed aloud, and the echoing valleys shuddered at the sudden silence. Then he entwined their fierce horns with wreaths of dusky hue, handling them himself, and first at the edge of that well-known wood he nine times spills lavish draughts of Bacchus into a hollowed trench, and gifts of vernal milk and Attic rain and propitiatory blood to the shades below; so much is poured out as the dry earth will drink. Then they roll tree trunks thither, and the sad priest bids there be three altars for Hecate and three for the maidens born of cursed Acheron; for thee, lord of Avernus, a heap of pinewood though sunk into the ground yet towers high in to the air; next to this an altar of lesser bulk is raised to Ceres of the underworld; in front and on very side the cypress of lamentation intertwines them. And now, their lofty heads marked with the sword and the pure sprinkled meal, the cattle fell under the stroke; then the virgin Manto, catching the blood in bowls, makes first libation, and moving thrice round all the pyres, as her holy sire commands, offers the half-dead tissues and the yet living entrails, nor delays to set the devouring fire to the dark foliage.

[468] And when Tiresias heard the branches crackling in the flames and the grim piles roaring – for the burning heat surges before his face, and the fiery vapour fills the hollows of his eyes – he exclaimed, and the pyres trembled, and the flames cowered at his voice: “Abodes of Tartarus and awful realms of insatiable Death, and thou, most cruel of the brothers, to whom the shades are given to serve thee, and the eternal punishments of the damned obey thee, and

the palace of the underworld, throw open in answer to my knocking the silent places and empty void of stern Persephone, and send forth the multitude that lurk in hollow night; let the ferryman row back across the Styx with groaning bark. Haste ye all together, nor let there be fore the shades but one fashion of return to the light; do thou, daughter of Perses, and the cloud-wrapt Arcadian with rod of power lead in separate throng the pious denizens of Elysium; but for those who died in crime, who in Erebus, as among the seed of Cadmus, are most in number, be thou their leader, Tisiphone, go on before with snake thrice brandished and blazing yew-branch, and throw open the light of day, nor let Cerberus interpose his heads, and turn aside the ghosts that lack the light.”

[488] He spoke, and together the aged man and Phoebus’ maiden waited in rapt attention. Nought feared they, for their hearts were inspired of the god; only the son of Oedipus was overcome by a great terror, and in agony he grasps, now the shoulders, now the hands and sacred fillets of the seer as he chants his awful strain, and would fain leave the rites unfinished. Even so a hunter awaits a lion roused by long shouting from his lair in the brushwood of a Gaetulian forest, steeling his courage and holding his spear in a perspiring grip; his face is frozen in terror and his steps tremble; “what beast approaches?” he wonders, and “how mighty?” and he hears the roar that gives ominous signal, and measures the growing sound in blind anxiety.

[500] Then Tiresias, as the ghosts did not yet draw night: “I bear you witness, goddesses, for whom we have drenched these flames and poured propitious goblets upon the rent earth, I can endure delay no further. Am I heard in vain, priest though I be? Or, if a hag of Thessaly bid you with her frenzied chant, will ye then go, or so often as a Colchian witch drives you with Scythian drugs and poisons, will Tartarus grow pale and stir affrighted: but of me have ye less regard, if I care not to raise bodies from the tomb, and bring forth urns crammed with ancient bones, and profane the gods of heaven and Erebus alike, or hunt with the sword the bloodless faces of the dead and pluck out their sickly tissues? Despise not these frail years nor the cloud that is upon my darkened brow, despise it not, I warn you! I, too, can vent my wrath. I know the name whose knowing and

whose speaking ye so dread, even Hecate I can confound, feared I not thee, O Thymbraean, and the high lord of the triple world, who may not be known. Him – but I am silent; peaceful old age forbids. Now will I –”

[518] But Manto, votary of Phoebus, eagerly cries: “Thou art heard, O father, the pale ghost draws nigh. The Elysian void is flung open, the spacious shadows of the hidden region are rent, the groves and black rivers lie clear to view, and Acheron belches forth noisome mud. Smoky Phlegethon rolls down his streams of murky flame, and Styx interfluent sets a barrier to the sundered ghosts. Himself I behold, all pale upon his throne, with Furies ministering to his fell deeds about him, and the remorseless chambers and gloomy couch of Stygian Juno. Black Death sits upon an eminence and numbers the silent peoples for their lord; yet the greater part of the troop remains. The Gortynian judge shakes them in his inexorable urn, demanding the truth with threats, and constrains them to speak out their whole lives’ story and at last confess their extorted gains. Why should I tell thee of Hell’s monsters, of Scyllas and the empty rage of Centaurs, and the Giants’ twisted chains of solid adamant, and the diminished shade of hundredfold Aegaeon?”

[536] “Even so,” said he, “O guide and strength of my old age, tell me not things well known. Who knows not the aye-returning rock, and the deceiving waters, and Tityos food of vultures, and Ixion swooning on the long circlings of the wheel? I myself in the years of stronger manhood beheld the hidden realms with Hecate as my guide, before heaven whelmed my vision, and drew all my light within my mind. Rather summon thou hither with thy prayers the Argive and the Theban souls; the rest, my daughter, bid thou with milk four times sprinkled to aver their steps, and to leave the dreary grove. Then tell me, pray, the dress and countenance of each, how great their desire for the spilled blood, which folk draw nigh more haughtily, and thus of each several thing inform my darkness.”

[549] She obeys, and weaves the charm wherewith she disperses the shades and calls them back when scattered; potent (but without their crimes) as the Colchian miadne, or the enchantress Circe on the Aeaeon strand. Then with these words she addressed her priestly sire: “First from the blood-red lake doth Cadmus raise his strengthless

head, and the daughter of Cytherea follows hard upon her spouse, and from their head twin serpents drink. The earth-born company, seed of Mars, throng round them, whose span of life one day did measure, and every hand is on its weapon, yea, on the sword-hilt; they repel and bar approach, and rush to combat with the fury of living men, nor care they to stop to the gloomy trench, but thirst to drain each other's blood. Near by is a band of Cadmus' daughters and the sons they mourned. Here we behold bereaved Autonoe and panting Ino, looking back at the bow and pressing her sweet pledge to her bosom, and Semele with arms held out to protect her womb. With shivered wands and bosom bare and bleeding, the frenzy of the god now spent, doth his mother, Cadmus' daughter, follow Pentheus with wailing cries; but he fleeth by Lethe's pathless region even beyond the Stygian lakes, where his kindlier sire Echion weeps over him and tends his mangled body. Sad Lycus too, I recognize, and the son of Aeolus, his right arm bent behind him, and a corpse thrown upon his laden shoulder. Nor yet doth that one change his appearance or the reproach of his transformation, even Aristaeus' son: the horns roughen his brow, while spear in hand he repels the hounds agape to rend him. But lo! with numerous train comes the jealous Tantalid, and proud in her grief counts o'er the bodies, nought humbled by her woes; she rejoices to have escaped the power of heaven, and now to give freer rein to her mad tongue."

[580] While the chaste priestess thus recounts the tale to her father, his hoary locks trembling rise erect with lifted chaplet, and his pale visage throbs with a rush of blood. No longer rests he on the supporting staff or faithful maiden, but standing upright cries: "Cease they song, my daughter, enough have I of external light, the sluggish mists depart, black night flees from my face. Comes it from the shades or from Apollo on high, this flooding inspiration? Lo! I behold all that thou didst tell me of. Behold! there mourn the Argive ghosts with eyes downcast! grim Abas, guilty Proetus and gentle Phoroneus, and Pelops maimed and Oenomaus soiled with cruel duest, all bedew their faces with plenteous tears. Hence do I prophesy for Thebes a favouring issue of the war. But what means this dense throng of warrior-souls, for such their wounds and weapons prove them? Why show they gory faces and breasts, and

with unsubstantial clamour raise and shake at me threatening arms? Do I err, O king, or re these that band of fifty? Chthonius thou dost behold, and Chromis and Phegeus and Maeon distinguished by my laurel. Rage not, ye chieftains, no mortal, believe me, dared that enterprise; 'twas iron Atropos span you those destined years. Ye have fulfilled your fate; for us cruel war remains, and Tydeus yet again." He spake, and as they swarmed upon his wool-bound chaplets he drove them off and pointed them to the blood.

[604] Reft of his comrade ghosts stood Laius on Cocytus' dreary strand – for already had the winged god restored him to un pitying Avernus– and glancing sidelong at his dire grandson, for he knew him by his face, came not like the rest of the multitude to drink the blood or the other outpourings, but breathed immortal hatred. But the Aonian seer delays not to lure him forward: "Renowned prince of Tyrian Thebes, since whose death no day has looked with kindly aspect on Amphion's citadel, O thou who hast now enough avenged thy bloody murder, O shade to whom thy issue have made full atonement, whom doest thou fly, unhappy one? He against whom thou ragest lies a living corpse, and feels Death joined with him in linked companionship, his sunken visage besmeared with blood and filth, and all the light of day put out. Trust me, 'tis a fate far worse than any dying! What cause hast thou to shun thy innocent grandson? Turn thy gaze hither, and take thy fill of sacrificial blood; then tell the chances that shall be, and the war's victims, whether thou art in hostile mood or pityest thy kindred's fortunes. Then will I grant thee to cross forbidden Lethe in the bark thou doest desire, and set thee again at peace in the blessed land, in the safe keeping of the gods of Styx."

[624] Soothed is he by the proffered honour, and brings the colour to his cheeks, then thus replies: "Why, when thou wert marshalling the spirits, O prophet equal to me in years, why was I chosen, first out of so many shades, to speak augury and to foretell what shall befall? 'Tis enough to have remembrance of the past. Seek ye my counsel, illustrious grandsons? nay, shame upon you! Him summon ye, him, to your unhallowed rites, who gladly pierces his father with the sword, who turns him to the place of his begetting, and casts back upon his innocent mother her own dear pledge of love. And now he

wearies the gods and the dark councils of the Furies, and supplicates my shade for the coming strife. But if I have found such favour as a prophet of these times of woe, I will speak, so far as Lachesis and grim Megaera suffer me: War cometh from every side, war of countless hosts, Gradivus sweeps on the sons of Lerna before the goads of fate; them there await portents of the earth, and weapons of heaven, and glorious deaths, and unlawful withholdings from the final fire. Victory is sure for Thebes, doubt it not, nor shall thy fierce kinsman have thy realm; but Furies shall possess it, and twofold impious crime, and alas, in your unhappy swords your cruel father triumphs." So speaking he faded from their sight, and left them in doubt at his mazy riddling words.

[646] Meanwhile the sons of Inachus with scattered troop had reached cool Nemea and the glades that witness to Hercules' renown; already they burn with eagerness to drive off Sidonian plunder, to destroy and ravage homesteads. Say thou, O Phoebus, who turned them from their path of anger, whence came their staying, and how in mid course they wandered from the way; to us but scant beginnings of the tale remain.

[652] In drunken languor Liber was bringing back his array of war from conquered Haemus; there had he taught the warrior Getae, two winters through to hold the orgies, and white Othrys to grow green along his ridges and Rhodope to bear Icarian shade; already he draws nigh in his chariot decked with vine-leaves to his mother's city; wild lynxes bear him company to right and left, and tigers lick the wine-soaked reins. In his train exulting Bacchanals carry their spoil of beasts, half-dead wolves and mangled she-bears. No sluggish retinue is his: Anger and Fury are there, and Fear and Valour, and Ardour never sober, and steps that stagger, an army most like to its prince. But when he sees the cloud of dust surge up from Nemea, and the sun kindling on the flashing steel, and Thebes not yet marshalled for battle, horror-struck at the sight, though faint and reeling, he commands the brazen cymbals and the drums and the noise of the double pipe, screaming loudest about his astonished ears, to be silent, and thus speaks: "Against me and my race doth that host plan destruction; after long time their rage gains violence anew; savage Argos and my stepmother's indomitable wrath are stirring up this

war. Doth it not even yet suffice – my mother’s cruel burning, the natal pyre, and the lightning-flash that I myself perceived? Nay, even against the relics and the tomb of her consumed rival, against idle Thebes doth she make impious attack. By craft will I contrive delay; hasten then thither, ho! my comrades, thither to yon plain!” At the signal the Hyrcanian team pricked up their crests, and, the word scarce spoken, he halted at his goal.

[680] It was the hour when panting day uplifts the sun to the mid summit of the world, when the languid heat hangs over the gaping fields, and all the groves let in the sky. He summons the spirits of the waters, and as they throng round him in silence he begins: “Ye rustic Nymphs, deities of the streams, no small portion of my train, fulfil the task that I now do set you. Stop fast with earth awhile the Argolic river-springs, I beg, and the pools and running brooks, and in Nemea most of all, whereby they pass to attack our walls, let he water flee from the depth; Phoebus himself, still at the summit of his path, doth aid you, so but your own will fail not; the stars lend their strong influence to my design, and the heat-bringing hound of my Erigone is foaming. Go then of your goodwill, go into the hidden places of earth; afterwards will I coax you forth with swelling channels, and all the choicest gifts at my altar shall be for your honour, and I will drive afar the nightly raids of the shameless horn-footed ones, and the lustful rapine of the Fauns.”

[697] He spoke, and a faint blight seemed to overspread their features, and the moist freshness withered from their hair. Straightway fiery thirst drains the Inachian fields: the streams are gone, fountains and lakes are parched and dry, and the scorched mud hardens in the river-beds. A sickly drought is upon the soil, the crops of tender springing wheat droop low; at the edge of the bank the flock stands baffled, and the cattle seek in vain the rivers where they bathed. Even so, when ebbing Nile buries itself in mighty caverns and gathers into its mouth the life-giving streams of Eastern winters, the flood-deserted valleys steam, Egypt gapes wide and waits expectant for the roar of her sire’s waves, till by dint of many prayers he give sustenance to the Pharian fields and bring on a great year of harvest.

[711] Dry is guilty Lerna, dry Lyrceus and great Inachus, and

Charadrus that rolls down boulders on his stream, bold Erasinus whom his banks ne'er contain, and Asterion like a billowy sea; oft hath he been heard on pathless uplands, oft known to break the repose of distant shepherds. But Langia alone – and she by the god's command – preserves her waters in the silence of a secret shade. Not yet had slaughtered Archemorus brought her sorrowful renown, no fame had come to the goddess; nevertheless, in far seclusion, she maintains her spring and grove. Great glory awaits the nymph, when the toiling contests of Achaean princes and the four-yearly festival of woe shall do honour to sad Hypsipyle and holy Opheltes.

[723] So then neither burning shields nor close-fitting breastplates have they power to carry – so fiercely doth fiery thirst scorch them – not only their mouths and the throat's passage are parched, but a fever rages within, their hearts beat heavily, the veins are thick congealed, and the tainted blood cleaves to the dried-up tissues; then the crumbling, sunburnt earth exhales a hot vapour. No rain of foam from the horses' mouths, their jaws close on dry bits, and far out hang their bridled tongues; no restraint of their masters do they suffer, but scour the plain, maddened by the fiery heat. This way and that Adrastus sends scouts to discover if the Licymnian lakes yet remain, or aught of Amymone's waters, but all lie drained by fire unseen, nor is there hope of moisture from Olympus, as though they ranged yellow Libya and Africa's desert sand and Syene shaded by no cloud.

[739] At length wandering in the woodland – for so had Euhius himself devised – they behold on a sudden Hypsipyle, beauteous in her grief; at her breast Opheltes hangs, not her own child, but the ill-starred offspring of Inachian Lycurgus; dishevelled is her hair and poor her raiment, yet in her countenance are marks of kingly birth, and a dignity not overwhelmed by a bitter lot. Then Adrastus, awestruck, thus addressed her: "Goddess, queen of the woodlands – for thy countenance and honourable bearing proclaim thee of no mortal birth – thou who beneath this fiery vault art blest in needing not to search for water, succour a neighbouring people; whether the Wielder of the Bow or Latona's daughter hath set thee in the bridal-chamber from her chaste company, or whether it be no lowly passion but one from on high doth make thee fruitful – for the ruler of the

gods himself is no stranger to Argive bowers – look upon our distressed ranks. Us hath the resolve to destroy guilty Thebes with the sword brought hither, but the unwarlike doom of cruel drought doth bow our spirits and drain our exhausted strength. Help thou our failing fortunes, whether thou hast some turbid river or a stagnant marsh; nought is to be held shameful, nought too mean in such a pass as ours. Thee now in place of the Winds and rainy Jupiter do we supplicate, do thou restore our ebbing might and fill again our spiritless hearts; so may thy charge grow under suspicious stars! Only let Jupiter grant us to return, what high-piled booty of war shalt thou be given! With the blood of numerous herds of Dirce will I recompense thee, O goddess, and a mighty altar shall mark this grove.” He spoke, but a fevered gasping makes havoc of his words even in mid-utterance, and with the rush of breath his dry tongue stutters; a like pallor holds all his warriors, and like panting of the hollow cheeks.

[768] With downcast eyes the Lemnian makes answer: “No goddess indeed am I, to help you, though of heaven be my descent; would that my griefs were not more than mortal! ’Tis an entrusted pledge you behold me nursing, and a nurse herself bereaved. But whether my sons found any lap or breasts to suckle them, heaven knoweth, – and yet I had once a kingdom and a mighty father. But why do I speak thus, and stay you in your weariness from the waters ye desire? Come now with me, perchance Langia’s stream yet runs unfailing; for even beneath the path of the furious Crab ’tis ever wont to flow, yea, through the shaggy hide of the Icarian star be blazing.” Forthwith, lest she prove a tardy guide to the Pelasgians, she sets down the clinging infant – alas! poor child! – on the grass near by – so willed the Fates – and when she would not be put down consoled his pretty tears with flowers heaped around and coaxing murmurs: like the Berecyntian mother, while she bids the Curetes leap in excited dance around the infant Thunderer; their cymbals clash in emulous frenzy, but Ide resounds with his loud wailings.

[786] But the child, lying in the bosom of the vernal earth and deep in herbage, now crawls forward on his face and crushes the soft grasses, now in clamours thirst for milk cries his beloved nurse; again he smiles, and would fain utter words that wrestle with his

infant lips, and wonders at the noise of the woods, or plucks at aught he meets, or with open mouth drinks in the day, and strays in the forest all ignorant of its dangers, in carelessness profound. Such was the young Mars amid Odrysian snow, such the winged boy on the heights of Maenalus, such was the rogue Apollo when he crawled upon Ortygia's shore, and set her side afloat.

[797] They go through the coppices and by devious dusky ways of shadowy green; some cluster round their guide, some throng behind, others outstrip her. In the midst of the band she moves with proud mien and hurrying step; and now the vale echoes loud as they approach the stream, and the plashing of water upon rocks assails their ears: then first from the column's head, just as he was, with banner raised high for the nimble companies, Argus exultant cries "Water!" and through the warrior's mouths ran the long-drawn shout of "Water!" Even so, along the shores of the Ambracian sea, sounds forth at the helmsman's prompting the shout of the seamen at the oars, and in turn the smitten land sends back the echo, when Apollo at their salutation brings Leucas into view. Into the stream the host plunged, indiscriminate and disordered, chieftains alike and common soldiers; levelling thirst makes no distinction in their confused ranks; bridled horses with their chariots, chargers with armed riders all dash madly in. Some the flood whirls away, some lose their footing on the slippery rocks, nor have they shame to trample their princes as they wrestle with the torrent, or to sink beneath the stream the face of a friend who cries for succour. Loud roar the waves, while far from the fountain-head is the river plundered, that once flowed green and clear, with gentle lucid waters, but now from the depths of its channel is muddied and befouled. Then the sloping banks and torn herbage are mingled with the stream; and now, though it be stained and filthy with mire and earth, and though their thirst be quenched, yet they drink still. One would think armies strove in fight, or a pitched battle raged in the flood, or the conquerors were looting a captured city.

[824] And one of the princes, standing in the midst of the streaming river, cried: "Nemea, noblest by far of verdant glades, chosen seat of Jove, not even the toils of Hercules wert thou more cruel, when he strangled the furious monster's shaggy neck, and throttled the breath

within its swollen limbs. So far let it suffice thee to have vexed thy people's enterprise. And thou, whom no suns are wont to tame, O horned one, so lavish of never failing waters, flow with prosperous current, from whatsoever storehouse thou settest free thy cooling springs, immortally replenished; for hoary Winter pours not out for thee her laid-up snows, nor doth the rainbow shed waters stolen from another fount, nor do the pregnant storm-clouds of Corus show thee favour, but thou flowest all thine own, and no star can overcome thee or destroy. Thee neither Ladon, Apollo's river, shall surpass, nor either Xanthus, nor threatening Spercheus, nor Lycormas of Centaur's fame; thee will I celebrate in peace, thee beneath the very cloud of war, and at the festal banquet, ay, honour thee next to Jove himself – so but thou gladly receive our triumphing arms, and again be pleased to give the welcome of thy streams to our tired warriors, and recognize of thy grace the host thou once didst save.”

BOOK 5

[1] Their thirst was quenched by the river, and the army having ravaged the water's depths was leaving the banks and the diminished stream; more briskly now the galloping steed scours the plain, and the infantry swarm exultant over the fields, inspired once more by courage and hope and warlike temper, as though from the blood-stained springs they had drunk the fire of battle and high resolution for the fray. Marshalled again in squadrons and the stern discipline of rank, they are bidden renew the march, each in his former place and under the same leader as before. Already the first dust is rising from the earth, and arms are flashing through the trees. Just so do flocks of screaming birds, caught by the Pharian summer, wing their way across the sea from Paraetionian Nile, whither the fierce winter drove them; they fly, a shadow upon the sea and land, and their cry follows them, filling the pathless heaven. Soon will it be their delight to breast the north wind and the rain, soon to swim on the melted rivers, and to spend the summer days on naked Haemus.

[17] Then the son of Talaus, ringed round once more by a band of chieftain peers, as he stood by chance beneath an aged ash-tree, and leaned on Polynices' spear hard by him, thus spoke: "Nay, tell us, thou, whoe'er thou art, to whom – such is thy glory – fate has brought our countless cohorts owing thee such high honour as the Sire of the gods himself would not despise – tell us, now that we are departing in all speed from thy waters, what is thy home or native land, from what stars didst thou draw thy life? And who was that sire thou spakest of? For heaven is not far to seek in thy descent, though fortune may have been traitorous; a nobler birth is in thy looks, and even in affliction thy countenance breathes majesty."

[28] The Lemnian sighed, and, stayed by shamefast tears awhile, then makes reply: "Deep are the wounds, O prince, thou biddest me revive, the tale of Lemnos and its Furies and of murder done even in the bed's embrace, and of the shameful sword whereby our manhood perished; ah! the wickedness comes back upon me, the freezing Horror grips my heart! Ah! miserable they, upon whom this frenzy came! alas, that night! alas, my father! for I am she – lest haply ye

feel shame for your kindly host – I am she, O chieftains, who alone did steal away and hide her father. But why do I weave the long prelude to my woes? Moreover battle summons you and your hearts' high enterprise. Thus much doth it suffice to tell: I am Hypsipyle, born of renowned Thoas, and captive thrall to your Lycurgus."

[40] Close heed they gave her then, and nobler she seemed and worthy of honour, and equal to such a deed; then all craved to learn her story, and father Adrastus foremost urged her: "Ay, verily, while we set in long array the columns of our van – nor does Nemea readily allow a broad host to draw clear, so closely hemmed is she by woodland and entangling shade – tell us of the crime, and of thy praiseworthy deed and the sufferings of thy people, and how cast out from thy realm thou art come to this toil of thine."

[48] Pleasant is it to the unhappy to speak, and to recall the sorrows of old time. Thus she begins: "Set amid the encircling tides of Aegean Nereus lies Lemnos, where Mulciber draws breath again from his labours in fiery Aetna; Athos hard by clothes the land with his mighty shadow, and darkens the sea with the image of his forests; opposite the Thracians plough, the Thracians, from whose shores came our sin and doom. Rich and populous was our land, no less renowned than Samos or echoing Delos or the other countless isles against which Aegon dashes in foam. It was the will of the gods to confound our homes, but our own hearts are not free from guilt; no sacred fires did we kindle to Venus, the goddess had no shrine. Even celestial minds are moved at last to resentment, and slow but sure the Avenging Powers creep on.

[61] "She, leaving ancient Paphos and her hundred shrines, with altered looks and tresses, loosed, so they say, her love-alluring girdle and banished her Idalian doves afar. Some, 'tis certain, of the women told it abroad that the goddess, armed with other torches and deadlier weapons, had flitted through the marriage chambers in the darkness of midnight with the sisterhood of Tartarus about her, and how she had filled every secret place with twining serpents and our bridal thresholds with dire terror, pitying not the people of her faithful spouse. Straightway fled ye from Lemnos, ye tender Loves: Hymen fell mute and turned his torch to earth; chill neglect came o'er the lawful couch, no nightly return of joy was there, no slumber in the

beloved embrace, everywhere reigned bitter Hatred and Frenzy and Discord sundering the partners of the bed. For the men were bent on overthrowing the boastful Thracians across the strait, and warring down the savage tribe. And in despite of home and their children standing on the shore, sweeter it was to them to bear Edonian winters and the brunt of the cold North, or, when at last still night followed a day of battle, to hear the sudden onburst of the crashing mountain torrent. But the women – for I at that time was sheltered by care-free maidenhood and tender years – sad and sick at heart sought tearful solace in converse day and night, or gazed out across the sea to cruel Thrace.

[85] “The sun in the midst of his labours was poisoning his shining chariot on Olympus’ height, as though at halt; four times came thunder from a serene sky, four times did the smoky caverns of the god open their panting summits, and Aegon, thought the winds were hushed, was stirred and flung a mighty sea against the shores: when suddenly the crone Polyxo is caught up in a dire frenzy, and deserting unwontedly her chamber flies abroad. Like a Teumesian Thyiad rapt to madness by the god, when the sacred rites are calling and the boxwood pipe of Ida stirs her blood, and the voice of Euanthe is heard upon the high hills: even so with head erect and quivering bloodshot eyes she ranges up and down the lonely city wildly clamouring, and beating at closed doors and thresholds summons us to council; her children clinging to her bear her woeful company. No less eagerly do all the women burst from their houses and rush to the citadel of Pallas on the hill-top: hither in feverish haste we press and crowd disorderly.

[102] “Then with drawn sword she commands silence, and prompting us to crime dares thus to speak among us: ‘Inspired by heaven and our just anger, O widowed Lemnians – steel now your courage and banish thought of sex! – I make bold to justify a desperate deed. If ye are weary of watching homes for ever desolate, of watching your beauty’s flower blight and wither in long barren years of weeping, I have found a way, I promise you – and the Powers are with us! – a way to renew the charm of Love; only take courage equal to your griefs, yea, and of that assure me first. Three winters now have whitened – which of us has known the bonds of

wedlock, or the secret honours of the marriage chamber? Whose bosom has glowed with conjugal love? Whom has Lucina beheld in travail? Whose ripening hope throbs in the womb as the due months draw on? Yet such permission is granted to beasts and birds to unite after their manner. Alas! sluggards that we are! Could a Grecian sire give avenging weapons to his daughters, and with treacherous joy drench in blood the bridegroom's careless slumber? And are we then to be but a spiritless mob? Or if ye would have deeds nearer home, lo! let the Thracian wife teach us courage, who with her own hand avenged her union and set the feast before her spouse. Nor do I urge you on, guiltless myself or without care: full is my own house, and huge – ay, look – the struggle. Behold these four together, the pride and comfort of their sire; though they should stay me with embraces and tears, even here in my bosom I will pierce them with the sword, and unite the brothers in one heap of wounds and blood, and set their father's corpse on their yet breathing bodies! Who of you can promise me a spirit for slaughter so great?

[130] “Yet more was she urging, when yonder out at sea white sails shone – the Lemnian fleet! Exultant, Polyxo seizes the moment's chance and cries again: ‘The gods themselves invite us – do we fail them? See, there are the ships! Heaven, avenging heaven, brings them to meet our wrath, and favours our resolve. Not vain was the vision of my sleep: with naked sword Venus stood over me as I slumbered, plain to my sight, and cried: “Why do ye waste your lives? Go, purge your chambers of the husbands who have lost their love! I myself will light you other torches and join you in worthier unions.” She spoke, and laid this sword, this very sword, believe it, on my couch. Take heed then, unhappy ones, whilst there is time to act. Lo! the waters churn and foam beneath the strong arms of the rowers – perchance Thracian brides come with them!’

[143] “At this all are wrought to highest pitch, and a loud clamour rolls upward to the skies. One would think it was Scythia swarming with tumultuous bucklers, when the Father gives rein to armed conflict and flings wide the gates of savage War. Their uproar held no varying voices, nor did dissension cleave into opposing factions, as is the wont of a crowd; one frenzy, one purpose inspires all alike, to lay desolate our homes, to break life's thread for young and old, to

crush babes against the teeming breasts, and with the sword make havoc through every age. Then in a green grove – a grove that darkens the ground hard by the lofty hill of Minerva, black itself, but above it the mountain looms huge, and the sunlight perishes in a twofold night – they pledged their solemn word, and thou wast witness, Martian Enyo, and thou, Ceres of the underworld, and the Stygian goddesses came in answer to their prayers; but unseen among them everywhere was Venus, Venus armed, Venus kindling wrath. Unwonted was the blood, for the wife of Charops made offering of her son, and they girded themselves, and at once all greedily stretched forth their right hands and mangled with the sword his marvelling breast, and made common oath in impious joy upon the living blood, while the new ghost hovers about his mother. What horror struck my limbs when I beheld so dire a sight! What colour came upon my cheeks! As when a deer is surrounded by savage wolves, and no strength is left in her tender breast and scanty confidence in speed of foot, she darts away in fearful flight, and each moment believes that she is taken, and hears behind her the snap of baffled jaws.

[170] “They were come, and already the keels grated on the edge of the strand, and they leap ashore in emulous haste. Unhappy they, whom their stark valour ‘neath Odrysian Mars destroyed not, nor the rage of the intervening sea! And now they fill with smoke of incense the high shrines of the gods, and drag their promised victims; but murky is the fire on every altar, and in no entrails breathes the god unimpaired. Slowly did Jupiter bring down the night from moist Olympus, and with kindly care held back, I ween, the turning sky, and stayed the fates, nor ever, the sun’s course finished, did the new shadows longer delay their coming. Yet at last the late stars shone in heaven, but their light fell on Paros and woody Thasos and the myriad Cyclades: Lemnos alone lies under a heavy sky’s thick pall of darkness, gloomy fogs descend upon it and above is a woven belt of night, alone is Lemnos unmarked of wandering mariners. And now, streaming forth from their homes and through the shade of sacred groves, they sate themselves in sumptuous feasting and drain vast golden goblets of the brimming wine, and tell at their leisure of battles on the Strymon, of sweat of war on Rhodope or frozen

Haemus. Nay more, their wives, unnatural consorts, recline among the garlands and by the festal tables, each in her choicest raiment; on that last night Cytherea had made their husbands gracious toward them, and given a brief moment of vain bliss after so long a time, and breathed into the doomed ones a passion soon to perish.

[195] “The choirs fell silent, a term is set to banqueting and amorous sport, and as night deepens the noises die away, when Sleep, shrouded in the gloom of his brother Death and dripping with Stygian dew, enfolds the doomed city, and from his relentless horn pours heavy drowse, and marks out the men. Wives and daughters are awake for murder, and joyously do the Sisters sharpen their savage weapons. They fall to their horrid work: in the breast of each her Fury reigns. Not otherwise on Scythian plains are cattle surrounded by Hyrcanian lionesses, whom hunger drives forth at sunrise and greedy cubs implore for their udders’ milk. Of a thousand shapes of guilt I hesitate what to tell thee that befell.

[207] “Bold Gorge stands over her chaplet-crowned Elymus, who on high-piled cushions pants out in his sleep the rising fumes of wine, and probes in his disordered garments for a vital blow, but his ill-omened slumber flees from him at the near approach of death. Confused and half-awake, he seizes his foe in his embrace, and she, as he holds her, straightway stabs through his side from behind, till the point touches her own breast. There at last the crime had ending: his head falls back, but still with quivering eyes and murmur of endearing words he seeks for Gorge, nor losses his arms from her unworthy neck. I will not now tell of the slaughter of the multitude, cruel as it was, but I will recall the woes of my own family: how I beheld thee, fair-haired Cydon, and thee, Crenaeus, with thy unshorn locks streaming o’er thy shoulders – my foster-brothers these, born of another sire – and brave Gyas, my betrothed, of whom I stood in awe, all fallen beneath the blow of bloodthirsty Myrmidone; and how his savage mother pierced Epopeus as he played among the garlands and the couches. Lycaste, her weapon flung away, is weeping over Cydimus, her brother of equal years, gazing alas! upon his doomed body, his face so like her own, the bloom upon his cheeks and that hair which she herself had decked in gold, when her cruel mother, her spouse already slain, stands over her, and threatening drives her

to the deed, and thrusts the sword upon her. Like a wild beast, that under a soothing master has unlearned its madness and is slow to make attack, and in spite of goadings and many a blow refuses to assume its native temper, so she falls upon him as he lies, and sinking down gathers the welling blood in her bosom, and staunches the fresh wounds with her torn tresses.

[236] “But when I beheld Alcimedea carry her father’s head still murmuring and his bloodless sword, my hair stood erect and fierce shuddering horror swept through my frame; that was my Thoas, methought, and that my own dread hand! Straightway in agony I rush to my father’s chamber. He indeed long while had pondered – what sleep for him whose charge is great? – although our spacious home lay apart from the city, what was the uproar, what the noises of the night, why the hours of rest were clamorous. I tell a confused story of the crime, what was their grievance, whence their passionate wrath. ‘No force can stop their frenzy; follow this way, unhappy one; they are pursuing, and will be on us if we linger, and perchance we shall fall together.’ Alarmed by my words he sprang up from the couch. We hurry through devious paths of the vast city, and, shrouded in a covering of mist, everywhere behold great heaps of nocturnal carnage, wheresoever throughout the sacred groves the cruel darkness had laid them low. Here could one see faces pressed down upon the couches, and the sword-hilts projecting from breasts laid open, broken fragments of great spears and bodies with raiment gashed and torn, mixing-bowls upset and banquets floating in gore, and mingled wine and blood streaming back like a torrent to the goblets from gaping throats. Here are a band of youths, and there old men whom no violence should profane, and children half-slain flung o’er the faces of their moaning parents and gasping o’er their trembling souls on the threshold of life. No fiercer are the banquet-revellings of the Lapithae on frozen Ossa, when the cloud-born ones grow hot with wine deep-drained; scarce has wrath’s first pallor seized them, when overthrowing their tables they start up to the affray.

[265] “Then first Thyoneus beneath night’s cover revealed himself to us in our distress, succouring his son Thoas in his hour of need, and shone in a sudden blaze of light. I knew him: yet he had bound no chaplets round his swelling temples, nor yellow grapes about his

hair: but a cloud was upon him, and his eyes streamed angry rain as he addressed us: `While the fates granted thee, my son, to keep Lemnos mighty and feared still by foreign peoples, never failed I to aid thy righteous labours; the stern Parcae have cut short the relentless threads, nor have my prayers and tears, poured forth in vain supplication before Jove, availed to turn away this woe; to his daughter hath he granted honour unspeakable. Hasten ye then your flight, and thou, O maiden, worthy offspring of my race, guide thy sire this way where the wall's twin arms approach the sea; at yonder gate, where thou thinkest all is quiet, stands Venus in fell mood and aids the furious ones; - whence hath the goddess this violence, this heart of Mars? Trust thou thy father to the broad deep: I will take thy cares upon me.'

[284] "So speaking he faded into air again, and since the shadows barred our vision lit up our road with a long stream of fire, in kindly succour. I follow where the signal leads, and anon entrust my sire, hidden in a vessel's curving beams, to the gods of the sea and the winds and Aegaeon who holds the Cyclades in his embrace; nor set we any limit to our mutual grief, were it not that Lucifer is already chasing the stars from the eastern pole. Then at last I leave the sounding shore, in brooding fear and scarce trusting Lyaeus' word, resolute in step but casting anxious thoughts behind me; nor rest I but must fain watch from every hill the breezes rising in heaven and the ocean waves.

[296] "Day rises shamefast, and Titan opening heaven to view turns aside his beams from Lemnos and hides his averted chariot behind the barrier of a cloud. Night's frenzied deeds lay manifest, and to all the new terrors of the day brought sudden shame, though all had share therein; they bury in the earth their impious crimes or burn with hurried fires. And now the Fury band and Venus sated to the full had fled the stricken city; now could the women know what they had dared, now rend their hair and bedew their eyes with tears. This island blest in lands and wealth, in arms and heroes, famed for its site and enriched of late by a Getic triumph, ahs lost, not by onslaught of the sea or of the foe or by stroke of heaven, all her folk together, bereft and ravaged to the uttermost. No men are left to plough the fields or cleave the waves, silent are the homes, swimming deep in

blood and stained red with clotted gore: we alone remain in that great city, we and the ghosts that fiercely hiss about our rooftops. I, too, in the inner courtyard of my house build high a flaming pile and cast thereon my father's sceptre and arms and well-known royal raiment, and sadly do I stand by the blazing welter of the pyre with blood-stained sword, and lament the feigned deed and empty funeral in fear, should they perchance accuse me, and pray that the omen may be void of harm towards my sire and that so my doubting fears of death may come to naught.

[320] "For these deserts – since the ruse of my pretended crime wins credence – the throne and kingdom of my father are given me – punishment indeed! Was I do deny their urgent pressure? I submitted, having oft called heaven to witness my innocence and to give protection; I succeed – ah! ghastly sovereignty – to power's pale image and to a Lemnos sad without its chief. And now ever more and more do they writhe in wakeful anguish, now openly lament, and little by little grow to hate Polyxo; now is it permitted to remember the crime, and to set altars to the dead and adjure with many prayers their buried ashes. Even so when the frightened heifers behold in horror their leader and sire of the stall, to whom belonged the pastures and the glory of the grown herd, lying mangled beneath the Massylian foe, leaderless and dejected goes the herd, and the very fields and rivers with the mute cattle mourn the monarch slain.

[335] "But lo! dividing the waters with brazen prow the Pelian pinewood bark draws nigh, stranger to that wide unadventured sea: the Minyae are here crew; the twofold splashing wave runs white along her towering sides: one would think Ortygia moved uprooted or a sundered mountain sailed upon the deep. But when the oars stayed poised in air and the waters fell silent, there came from the vessel's midst a voice sweeter than dying swans or quill of Phoebus, and the seas themselves drew night the ship. Thereafter did we learn 'twas Orpheus, son of Oeagrus, who leaning against the mast sang thus amid the rowers and bade them know such toils no more. Towards Scythian Boreas were they voyaging and the mouth of the unattempted sea that the Cyanean rocks hold fast. We at the sight of them deemed them Thracian foes, and ran to our homes in wild confusion like crowding cattle or fluttering birds. Alas! where now is

our frenzied rage? We man the harbour and the shore-embracing walls, which give a far view over the open sea, and the lofty towers; hither in excited haste they bring stones and stakes and the arms that mourn their lords, and swords stained with slaughters; nay, it shames them not to don stiff woven corselets and to fit helms about their wanton faces; Pallas blushed and marvelled at their bold array, and Gradivus laughed on the far slopes of Haemus. Then first did our headlong madness leave our minds, nor seemed it a mere ship on the salt sea, but the gods' late-coming justice and vengeance for our crimes that drew nigh o'er the deep.

[361] "And already were they distant from the land the range of a Gortynian shaft, when Jupiter brought a cloud laden with dark rain and set it over the very rigging of the Pelasgian ship; then the waters shudder, all its light is stolen from the sun and the gloom thickens, and the wave straightway takes the colour of the gloom; warring winds tear the hollow clouds and rend the deep, the wet sand surges up in the black eddies, and the whole sea hangs poised between the conflict of the winds, and with arching ridge now all but touching the stars falls shattered; nor has the bewildered vessel its former motion, but pitches to and fro, with the Triton on its bows now projecting from the waters' depths, now borne aloft in air. Nor aught avails the might of the heroes half-divine, but the demented mast makes the vessel rock and sway, and falling forward with overbalancing weight smites upon the arching waves, and the oars drop fruitlessly on the rowers' chests.

[376] "We, too, from rocks and every walled rampart, while they thus toil and rage against the seas and the southern blasts, with weak arms shower down wavering missiles – what deed did we not dare? – on Telamon and Peleus, and even on the Tirynthian we bend our bow. But they, hard pressed both by storm and foe, fortify, some of them, the ship with shields, others bale water from the hold; others fight, but the motion makes their bodies helpless, and there is no force behind their reeling blows. We hurl our darts more fiercely, and the iron rain vies with the tempest, and enormous stakes and fragments of millstones and javelins and missiles trailing tresses of flame fall now into the sea, now on the vessel: the decking of the bark resounds and the beams groan as the gaping holes are torn. Even

so does Jupiter lash the green fields with Hyperboreans snow; beasts of all kinds perish on the plains, and birds are overtaken and fall dead, and the harvest is blasted with untimely frost; then is there thundering on the heights, and fury in the rivers. But when from on high Jove flung his brand with shock of cloud on cloud, and the flash revealed the mariners' mighty forms, our hearts were frozen fast, our arms dropped shuddering and let fall the unnatural weapons, and our true sex once more held sway.

[398] "We behold the sons of Aeacus, and Ancaeus threatening mightily our walls, and Iphitus with long spear warding off the rocks; clear to view among the desperate band the son of Amphitryon outtops them all, and alternately on either hand weighs down the ship and burns to leap into the midst of the waves. But Jason – not yet did I know him to my cost – leaping nimbly over benches and oars and treading the backs of heroes, calls now on great Oenides, now on Idas and Talaus, now on the son of Tyndarues dripping with the white spume of the sea, and Calais driving aloft in the clouds of his frosty sire to fasten the sails to the mast, and with voice and gesture again and again encourages them. With vigorous strokes they lash the sea and shake the walls, but none the more do the foaming waters yield, and the flung spears rebound from our towers. Tiphys himself wearies by his labours the heavy billows and the tiller that will not hear him, and pale with anxiety oft changes his commands, and turns right- and leftward from the land the prow that would fain dash itself to shipwreck on the rocks, until from the vessel's tapering bows the son of Aeson holds forth the olive-branch of Pallas hat Mopsus bore, and through the tumult of his comrades would prevent him, asks for peace; his words were swept away by the headlong gale.

[420] Then came there a truce to arms, and the tempest likewise sank to rest, and day looked forth once more from the turbid heaven. Then those fifty heroes, their vessels duly moored, as they leap from the sheer height shake the stranger shores, tall comely sons of glorious sires, serene of brow and known by their bearings, now that the swelling rage has left their countenances. Even so the denizens of heaven are said to burst forth from their mystic portals, when they desire to visit the homes and the coast and the lesser banquet of the red Aethiopians: rivers and mountains yield them passage, Earth

exults beneath their footsteps and Atlas knows a brief respite from the burden of the sky.

[431] “Here we behold Theseus, lately come in triumph from setting Marathon free, and the Ismarian brethren, pledges of the North Wind’s love, with red wing-feathers whirring loud on either temple; here, too, Admetus, whom Phoebus was content to serve, and Orpheus, in nought resembling barbarous Thrace; then Calydon’s offspring and the son-in-law of watery Nereus. The twin Oebalidae bewilder our vision with puzzling error: each wears a bright red mantle and wields a spear, bare on the shoulders of each and their faces unbearded, their locks are aglow with the same starry radiance. Young Hylas bravely marching follows great Hercules stride for stride, scarce equalling his pace, slow though he bear his mighty bulk, and rejoices to carry the Lernaean arms and to sweat beneath the huge quiver.

[445] “So once more Venus and Love try with their secret fires the fierce hearts of the Lemnian women. Then royal Juno instils into their minds the image of the heroes’ arms and raiment, and their signs of noble race, and all fling open their doors in emulous welcome to the strangers. Then first were fires lit on the altars, and unspeakable cares were forgotten, then came feasting and happy sleep and tranquil nights, nor without heaven’s will, I ween, did they find favour, when they confessed their crime. My fault, too, my fated pardonable fault, perchance ye would hear, O chieftains: by the ashes and avenging furies of my people I swear, innocent and unwilling did I light the torch of alien wedlock – as Heaven’s Providence doth know – though Jason be wily to ensnare young maidens’ hearts: laws of its own bind blood-stained Phasis, and you, ye Colchians, breed far different passions. And now the skies have broken through the bonds of frost and grow war in the long sunlit days and the swift year has wheeled round to the opposite pole. A new progeny is brought to birth in answer to our prayers, and Lemnos is filled with the cries of babes un hoped-for. I myself also bear twin sons, memorial of a ravished couch, and, made a mother by my rough guest, renew in the babe his grandsire’s name; nor may I know what fortune hath befallen since I left them, for now full twenty years are past, if the fates but suffer them to live and Lycaste reared them as I prayed her.

[468] “The boisterous seas fell tranquil and a milder southern breeze invites the sails: the ship herself, hating to tarry in the quiet haven, strains with her hawsers at the resisting rock. Then would the Minyae fain begone, and cruel Jason summons his comrades – would he had ere that sailed past my shores, who recked not of his own children, nor of his sworn word; truly his fame is known in distant lands: the fleece of seafaring Phrixus hath returned. When the destined sun had sunk beneath the sea and Tiphys felt the coming breeze and Phoebus’ western couch blushed red, once more alas! there was lamentation, once more the last night of all. Scarce is the day begun, and already Jason high upon the poop gives the word for sailing, and strikes as chieftain the first oar-stroke on the sea. From rocks nad mountain height we follow them with our gaze as they cleave the foamy space of outspread ocean, until the light wearied our roaming vision and seemed to interweave the distant waters with the sky, and made the sea one with heaven’s extremest marge.

[486] “A rumour goes about the harbour that Thoas has been carried o’er the deep and is reigning in his brother’s isle of Chios, that I am innocent and the funeral pyre a mockery; the impious mob clamours loud, maddened by the stings of guilt, and demands the crime I owe them. Moreover, secret murmurings arise and increase among the folk: ‘Is she alone faithful to her kindred, while we rejoiced to slay? Did not heaven and fate ordain the deed? why then bears she rule in the city, the accursed one?’ Aghast at such words – for a cruel retribution draws nigh, nor does queenly pomp delight me – I wander alone in secret on the winding shore and leave the deadly walls by the road of my father’s flight, well known to me; but not a second time did Euhan meet me, for a band of pirates putting in to shore carried me speechless away and brought me to your land a slave.”

[499] While thus the Lemnian exile recounts her tale to the Lernaean princes and by a long plaint consoles her loss, forgetful – so ye gods constrained her! – of her absent charge, he, with heavy eyes and drooping head and wearied by his long childish play, sinks to slumber, deep buried in the luxuriant earth, while one hand holds the grass tight-clutched.

[505] Meanwhile an earth-born serpent, the accursed terror of the Achaeon grove, arises on the mead, and loosely dragging his huge

bulk now bears it forward, now leaves it behind him. A livid gleam is in his eyes, the green spume of foaming poison in his fangs, and a threefold quivering tongue, with three rows of hooked teeth, and a cruel blazonry rises high upon his gilded forehead. The Inachian countrymen held him sacred to the Thunderer, who has the guardianship of the place and the scant worship of the woodland altars; and now he glides with trailing coils about the shrines, now grinds the hapless forest oaks and crushes huge ash-trees in his embrace; oft lies he in continuous length from bank to bank across the streams, and the river sundered by his scales swells high. But fiercer now, when all the land is panting at the command of the Ogygian god and the Nymphs are hurrying to the hiding of their dusty beds, he twists his tortuous writhing frame upon the ground, and the fire of his parched venom fills him with a baneful rage. Over pools and arid lakes and stifled springs he winds his way, and wanders in the riverless valleys, and consumed by burning thirst now flings back his head and laps the liquid air, now brushing o'er the groaning fields cleaves downward to the earth, should there be any sap or moisture in the grasses; but the herbage falls stricken by his hot breath, whereso'er he turns his head, and the mead shrivels at the hissing of his jaws; vast is he as the Snake that divides the pole from the Northern Wain and passes even unto the Southern winds and an alien sky, or as he that shook the horns of sacred Parnassus, twining his coils among them, until pierced by a hundred wound he bore, O Delian, a forest of thy arrows.

[534] What god appointed for thee, little one, the burden of so dire a fate? Scarce on thy life's earliest threshold, art thou slain by such a foe? Was it that thus thou mightest be sacred for ever to the peoples of Greece and dying merit so glorious a burial? Thou diest, O babe, struck by the end of the unwitting serpent's tail, and straightway the sleep left thy limbs and thine eyes opened but to death alone. But when thy frightened dying wail rose upon the air and the broken cry fell silent on thy lips, like the half-finished accents of a dream, Hypsipyle, heard it and sped with faint and failing limbs and stumbling gait; her mind forebodes sure disaster, and with gaze turned to every quarter she scans the ground in search, vainly repeating words the babe would know; but he is nowhere, and the

recent tracks are vanished from the meadows. Gathered in a green circle lies the sluggish foe and fills many an acre round, so lies he with his head slantwise on his belly. Struck with horror at the sight the unhappy woman roused the forest's depths with shriek on shriek; yet still he lies unmoved.

[554] Her sorrowful wail reached the Argives' ears: forthwith the Arcadian knight at his chief's word flies thither in eager haste and reports the cause. Then at last, at the glint of armour and the shouting of men he rears his scaly neck in wrath: with a vast effort tall Hippomedon seizes a stone, the boundary mark of a field, and hurls it through the empty air; with such a whirlwind do the poised boulders fly forth against the barred gates in time of war. Vain was the chieftain's might, in a moment had the snake bent back his supple neck and foiled the coming blow. The earth re-echoes and in the pathless woods the close-knit boughs are rent and torn. "But ever shalt thou escape my stroke," cries Capaneus, and makes for him with ashen spear, "whether thou be the savage inmate of the trembling grove, or a delight granted to the gods – ay, would it were to the gods! – never even if thou broughtest a Giant to battle with me upon those limbs." The quivering spear flies, and enters the monster's gaping mouth and cleaves the rough fastenings of the triple tongue, then through the upright crest and the adornment of his darting head it issues forth, and fouled with the brain's black gore sinks deep into the soil. Scarce has the pain run the length of his whole frame, with lightning speed he twines his coils around the weapon, and tears it out and carries it to his lair in the dark temple of the god; there measuring his mighty bulk along the ground he gasps and hisses out his life at his patron's shrine.

[578] Him did the sorrowing marsh of kindred Lerna mourn, and the Nymphs who were wont to strew him with vernal flowers, and Nemea's fields whereon he crawled; ye too, ye woodland Fauns, bewailed him in every grove with broken reeds. Jupiter himself had already called for his weapons from the height of air, and long had clouds and storms been gathering, had not the god allayed his wrath and Capaneus been preserved to merit a direr punishment; yet the wind of the stirred thunderbolt sped and swayed the summit of his crested helm.

[588] And now the unhappy Lemnian, wandering o'er the fields when the place was rid of the serpent, grows pale to behold on a low mound afar the herbage stained with streams of blood. Thither frantic in her grief she hastens, and recognizing the horror falls as though lightning-struck on the offending earth, nor in the first shock of ruin can find speech or tears to shed; she only bends and showers despairing kisses, and breathlessly searches the yet warm limbs for traces of the vanished life. Nor face nor breast remain, the skin is torn away and the frail bones are exposed to view, and the sinews are drenched in fresh streams of blood: the whole body is one wound. Even as when in a shady ilex-tree a lazy serpent has ravaged the home and brood of a mother bird, she, returning, marvels at the quiet of her clamorous abode, and hovers aghast, and in wild dismay drops from her mouth the food she brings, for there is nought but blood on the tree and feathers shed about the plundered nest.

[606] When, poor woman, she had gathered the mangled limbs to her bosom and covered them in her tresses, at length her voice released gave passage to her grief and her moans melted into words: "Archemorus, sweet image of my babes in my lonely plight, solace of my woes and exile, and pride of my thralldom, what guilty gods have slain thee, O my joy, whom, when I lately parted from thee, I left frolicking and crushing the grasses in thy crawl? Alas, where is that star-bright face? Where are thy half-formed words and tonguetied utterance, those smiles, and mutterings that I alone could understand? How often used I to talk to thee of Lemnos and the Argo, with my long sad tale soothe thee to sleeping! For so indeed did I console my griefs, and gave the babe a mother's breasts, where now in my bereavement the milk flows in vain and falls in barren drops upon thy wounds. 'Tis the gods' work, I see: O cruel presage of my dreams and nightly terrors! ah! Venus, who never appeared in the darkness to my startled vision but ill befell! But why do I blame the gods? Myself I exposed thee to thy fate – for why should I fear to confess, so soon to die? What madness carried me away? Could I so utterly forget a charge so dear? While I recount the fortunes of my country and the boastful prelude of my own renown – what true devotion, what loyalty! – I have paid thee, Lemnos, the crime I owed. Take me then, ye princes, to the deadly snake, if ye have any

gratitude for the service that has cost so dear, or any respect to my words; or slay me yourselves with the sword, lest I see again my sorrowing masters and bereaved Eurydice, now made my foe – although my grief comes not short of hers. Am I to carry this hapless burden and cast it on a mother's lap? nay, what earth may sooner engulf me in its deepest shades?" Thereupon, her face befouled with dust and gore, she turns to follow the mighty chieftains, and secretly as they grieve lays the waters to their charge.

[638] And now the news, sweeping sudden though the palace of devout Lycurgus, had brought full measure of tears to himself and all his house – himself, as he drew nigh from the sacred summit of Perseus' mountain, where he had offered sacrifice to the angry Thunderer, and was shaking his head as he returned from the ill-omened entrails. Here he abides without share in the Argolic war, not lacking in courage, but the temples and the altars kept him back; nor had the gods' response and ancient warning yet faded from his mind, nor the words received from the innermost shrine: "In the Dircaean war, Lycurgus, the first death shall be thine to give." Of that he is afraid, he is tortured at the trumpets' sound, and envies the doomed hosts.

[650] But lo! – so the gods keep faith! – the daughter of Thoas accompanies the mangled infant's funeral train, and his mother comes to meet her, leading a band of women and troops of mourners. But not sluggish was the devotion of great-souled Lycurgus: grief emboldened him, the father's mad rage thrust back the tears, and with long strides he covers the fields that stay his wrath, and cries aloud: "Where now is she, who recks little or is glad of the shedding of my blood? Lives she? Then seize her, comrades, and bring her speedily! I will make her insolence forget all her tale of Lemnos and her father and her lies about a race divine!" He advanced and prepared to deal the death-blow, his sword drawn in rage; but as he came, the Oeneian hero, quick to act, thrust his shield against his breast and barred the way, with stern rebuke: "Abate thy fury, madman, whoe'er thou art!" and Capaneus likewise and brave Hippomedon, with sword drawn back, and the Erymanthian, with levelled blade, were there to succour, and the prince is dazzled by their flashing swords: but on the other side the rustic bands protect

their king. Between them Adrastus in gentler mood and Amphiarus, fearing the strife of kindred fillets, cry: "Not so, I pray you, unhand the sword! Our sires are of one blood, give not vent to rage! Thou first disarm!" But Tydeus, his spirit not assuaged, rejoins: "Darest thou then slay upon the grave – and in revenge for what a death! – and before so many thankless thousands the guide and preserver of the Inachian host, who was once a queen, and has Thoas for her sire and shining Euhan for her ancestor? Is it too little for thy cowardice that, when on all sides they folk are speeding to war, thou alone keepest peace among the hurrying cavalcades? Keep it them, and let the Grecian triumph find thee still groaning at this tomb."

[680] He spoke, and the other, now more controlled as anger ebbed, replied: "Indeed I thought your troops were bound, not for the walls of Thebes, but hither with hostile intent. March on then to destroy, if kindred murder so delights you, flesh first your arms at home, ay, and let impious fire – what indeed is not lawful? – devour Jove's temple that but now I sought in vain, if I thought, oppressed by bitter grief, that I had power upon a worthless slave, who am her king and lord! But he ruler of the gods beholds it, yea he beholds it, and his wrath, though late it fall, awaits your daring deeds." So speaking he looks back toward the city. And lo! there another armed affray is raging from house to house; recent Fame had outstripped the horsemen's flying squadrons, with twofold tumults gathered beneath her wings; some repeat that Hypsipyle is being dragged to death, some that she is even now meeting her fate, and is deserving of it: they believe, nor stay their anger, and already brands and javelins fly against the palace, cries are raised to overturn the kingdom, and to seize and carry away Lycurgus with Jove and all his shrines; the houses re-echo with female shrieks, and routed grief flees before panic terror.

[699] But Adrastus, aloft upon his car of wing-footed steeds and bearing with him the daughter of Thoas in the sight of the raging warriors, drives in amongst the ranks and cries: "Give o'er, give o'er; no cruel deed has been done, nor has Lycurgus deserved to perish thus, and lo! here is the discoverer of the welcome stream!" So when with opposing blasts Boreas and Eurus from one quarter, and from another Auster black with rain has upheaved the sea, when day is banished and the hurricanes hold sway, high on his chariot comes the

ruler of the deep, and twy-formed Triton swimming by the foaming brides gives signal far and wide to the subsiding main; Thetis is smooth again, and hills and shores emerge.

[710] Which of the gods consoled her loss, and by granting her heart's desire brought joys unhopèd-for to sad Hypsipyle and recompense for tears? Thou, Eühan, author of her race, who didst convey the twin youths from Lemnos' shore to Nemea, and wert preparing a wondrous destiny. In search of their mother they came, and not inhospitably had the palace of Lycurgus given them entry, when forthwith came that message to the monarch of his offspring's piteous death. Therefore hasten they to his support – so strange is Chance, so blind the purpose of men! – and favour the king's cause; but when "Lemnos" and "Thoas" reached their ears, straight had they rushed through weapons and troops of men, and both with tears snatch their mother to their greedy embrace and in turn press her to their bosoms. But she, like a stony rock, with countenance unmoved stirs not nor dares believe the gods she knows so well. But when she recognized their faces and the marks of Argo on their swords the mariners had left and Jason's name inwoven on their shoulders, her grief was stayed, and overcome by so great a blessing she swooned, and her eyes were moist with other tears. Signs too were shown in heaven, and he drums and cymbals of the god and the glad huzzas of his wild train resounded through the echoing air.

[731] Then the devout Oeclides, so soon as wrath appeased made the crowd fall silent, and there was approach to tranquil ears: "Hearken, O ruler of Nemea and ye flower of Argive princes, what Apollo surely reveals for us to do. Long hath this woe been ordained for you at Argive hands, unwavering runs the line of Destiny. The drought of perished streams, the deadly serpent, and the child Archemorus, whose name, alas, bears the seal of our fate, all these events flow down and issue from the high purpose of the gods. A truce now to your passions, lay down your hasty arms! To this infant enduring honours must be paid. Truly he hath deserved them; let virtue make fair libation to a virtuous soul, and would that thou mightest continue, O Phoebus, to weave even more delays, would that new chances might ever bar us from the fray, and thou, O deadly Thebes, fade from our sight for ever! And O ye happy ones, who

have surpassed the common fate of noble parents, whose name will long endure through the ages, while Lerna's lake remains and father Inachus flows on, while Nemea throws the flickering shadows across her fields – profane not this holy rite by weeping, mourn not for the gods: for a god is he, yea a god, nor would he prefer to enjoy a Pylian age, nor a life that outlived the Phrygian span.” He finished, and night wrapt the heaven in her enfolding shade.

BOOK 6

[1] Far-travelling Rumour glides through the Danaan cities, and tells that the Inachidae are ordaining sacred rites for the new tomb, and games thereto, whereby their martial valour may be kindled and have foretaste of the sweat of war. Customary among the Greeks is such a festival: first did the dutiful Alcides contest this honour with Pelops in the fields of Pisa, and brush the dust of combat from his hair with the wild-olive spray; next is celebrated the freeing of Phocis from the serpent's coils, the battle of the boy Apollo's quiver; then the dark cult of Palaemon is solemnized about the gloomy altars, so oft as undaunted Leucothea renews her grief, and in the time of festival comes to the welcoming shores: from end to end Isthmos resounds with lamentation and Echionian Thebes makes answering wail. And now the peerless princes whose rearing links Argos with heaven, princes whose mighty names the Aonian land and Tyrian mothers, utter with sighs, meet in rivalry and arouse their naked vigour to the fray: just as the two-banked galleys that must venture the unknown deep, whether they provoke the stormy Tyrrhenian or the calm Aegean sea, first prove on a smooth lake their tackling and rudder and nimble oars, and learn to face the real perils; but when their crews are trained, then confidently do they push further out into the main nor seek the vanished coast.

[25] The bright consort of Tithonus had shown in heaven her toil-bringing car, and Night and Sleep with empty horn were fleeing from the pale goddess' wakeful reins; already the ways are loud with wailing, and the palace with fearful lamentation; from afar the wild forests catch the sounds, and scatter them in a thousand echoes. The father himself sits stripped of the honour of the twined fillet, his unkempt head and neglected beard sprinkled with dust of mourning. More violent than he and passionate with more than a man's grief, the bereaved mother urges on her handmaidens by example and by speech, willing though they be, and yearns to cast herself upon the mangled remains of her child, and as oft they tear her from them and bring her back. Even the father too restrains her. Soon when the Inachian princes with royal bearing entered the sorrowing portals,

then, as though the stroke were fresh and the babe but newly hurt, or the deadly serpent had burst into the palace, they smite their breasts though wearied and raise clamour upon clamour, and the doors re-echo with the new-kindled wailing; the Pelasgians feel their ill-will and plead their innocence with streaming tears.

[45] Adrastus himself, whensoever the tumult was quelled and the distracted house fell silent, and opportunity was given, addressed the sire unbidden with consoling words, reviewing now the cruel destiny of mankind and the inexorable thread of doom, now giving hope of other offspring and pledges that by heaven's favour would endure. But he had not ended, when mourning broke forth anew. Nor does the king more gently hear his friendly speech than the madness of the fierce Ionian hears the sailors shouting prayers upon the deep, or the wayward lightning heed the frail clouds.

[54] Meanwhile the flame-appointed pyre and the infant bier are intertwined with bloomy boughs and shoots of cypress; lowest of all is laid the green produce of the country-side, then a space is more laboriously wrought with grassy chaplets and the mound is decked with flowers that soon must perish; third in order rises a heap of Arabian spices and the rich profusion of the East, with lumps of hoary incense and cinnamon that has come down from Belus of old. On the summit is set tinkling gold, and a soft coverlet of Tyrian purple is raised high, gleaming everywhere with polished gems, and within a border of acanthus is Linus woven and the hounds that caused his death: hateful ever to his mother was the marvellous work, and ever did she turn her eyes from the omen. Arms, too, and spoils of ancestors of old are cast about the pyre, the pride and chequered glory of the afflicted house, as though the funeral train bore thither the burden of some great warrior's limbs; yet even empty and barren fame delights the mourners, and the pomp magnifies the infant shade. Wherefore tears are held in high reverence and afford a mournful joy, and gifts greater than his years are brought to feed the flames. For his father, in haste for the fulfilment of his prayers had set apart for him quivers and tiny javelins and innocent arrows, and even already in his name was rearing proved horses of his stable's famous breed; loud-ringing belts too are brought, and armour waiting for a mightier frame. Insatiable hopes! what garments did she not

make for him in eager haste, credulous woman, and robes of purple, emblems of royalty, and childish sceptre? Yet all does the sire himself ruthlessly condemn to the murky flames, and bid his own signs of rank be borne withal, if by their loss he may sate his devouring grief.

[84] In another region the army hastens at the bidding of the wise augur to raise an airy pile, high as a mountain, of tree-trunks and shattered forests, to dark burnt-offering for the ill-omened war. These labour to cut down Nemea and its shady glens and hurl them to the ground, and to lay the forests open to the sunlight. Straightway a wood that axe has never shorn of its ancient boughs is felled, a wood than which none more rich in abundant shade between the vales of Argolis and Mount Lycaeus ever raised aloft its head above the stars; in reverend sanctity of eld it stands, and is said not only to reach back in years beyond the grandsires of men, but o have seen Nymphs pass and flocking Fauns and yet be living. Upon the wood came pitiful destruction: the beasts are fled, and the birds, terror-driven, flutter forth from their warm nests; the towering beeches fall and the Chaonian groves and the cypress that the winter harms not, spruces are flung prostrate that feed the funeral flames, ash-trees and trunks of holm-oak and yews with poisonous sap. And mountain ashes destined to drink the gore of cursed battle, and oaks unconquerable by age. Then the daring fir is cloven, and the pine with fragrant wound, alders that love the sea bow to the ground their unshorn summits, and elms that give friendly shade to the vines. The earth groans: not so are the woods of Ismarus swept away uprooted, when Boreas breaks his prison cave and rears his head, no swifter does the nightly flame tear through the forest before the south wind's onset; hoar Pales and Silvanus, lord of the shady glen, and the folk, half-god, half-animal, go forth weeping from the leisure haunts they loved, and as they go the woodland groans in sympathy, nor can the Nymphs loose the trees from their embrace. As when a leader gives over to the greedy conquerors the captured towers to plunder, scarce is the signal heard, and the city is nowhere to be found; they drive and carry, take captive and strike down in fury unrestrained: the din of battle was less loud.

[118] Two altars now of equal height had they with like toil erected,

one to the doleful shades, the other to the gods above, when the low braying of the pipe with curved horn gave signal for lament, the pipe that by Phrygia's mournful use was wont to escort the youthful dead. They say that Pelops ordained for infant shade this funeral rite and chant, to which Niobe, undone by the quivers twain, and dressed in mourning garb, brought the twelve urns to Sipylus.

[126] The Grecian leaders bear the funeral gifts and offerings for the flame, each by his titles witnessing to his race's honourable renown; long after, high upon the necks of youths chosen by the prince from all his host, amid wild clamour comes the bier. The Lernaean chieftains encircle Lycurgus, a female company are gathered about the queen, nor does Hypsipyle go unattended: the Inachidae, not unmindful, surround her close, her sons support her bruised arms, and suffer their new-found mother to lament.

[135] There, as soon as Eurydice came forth from her ill-starred palace, she bared her breast and cried aloud, and with beating of her bosom and prelude of long wailings thus began: "I never thought, my son, to follow thee with this encompassing train of Argive matrons, nor thus did I picture in my foolish prayers thy infant years, nought cruel did I expect; whence at my life's end should I have fear for thee from a Theban war, whereof I knew not? What god has taken delight in joining battle with our race? Who vowed this crime against our arms? But thy house, O Cadmus, has not suffered yet, no infant do Tyrian crowds lament. 'Tis I that have borne the first-fruits of grief and untimely death, before even trumpets brayed or sword was drawn, while in indolent neglect I put faith in his nurse's bosom and entrusted to her my babe to suckle. Why should I not? She told a tale of cunning rescue of her sire and her innocence. But look! this woman, who alone, we must think, abjured the deadly deed she vowed, and alone of her race was free from the Lemnian madness, this woman here – and ye believe her, after her daring deed! – so strong in her devotion, cast away in desolate fields, no king or lord, but, impious one! another's child, that is all! and left him on a path in an ill-famed wood, where not merely poisonous snake – what need, alas, of so huge a slayer? – but a strong tempest only, or a bough broken by the wind, or groundless fright could have availed to cause his death! Nor you would I accuse in my stricken grief;

unalterable and sure came this curse upon the mother, at his nurse's hands. Yet her didst thou favour more, my son, her only didst thou know and heard when she called thee; me thou knewest not, no joy had thy mother of thee. But she, the fiend! she heard thy cries and thy laughter mixt with tears, and caught the accents of thy earliest speech. She was ever thy mother, while life remained to thee, I only now. But woe is me! that I cannot punish her for her crime! Why bring ye these gifts, ye chieftains, to the pyre, why these empty rites? Herself, I beg – no more does his shade demand – herself, I pray you, offer, both to the dead and to the ruined parent, I beseech you by this first bloodshed of the war, for which I bore him; so may the Ogyian mothers have deaths to mourn as sad as mine!" She tears her hair and repeats her supplication: "Ay, give her up, nor call me cruel or greedy of blood; I will die likewise, so be it that, my eyes full-sated by her just death, we fall upon the selfsame fire."

[177] Thus loudly crying she beheld elsewhere afar Hypsipyle lamenting – for she too spares nor hair nor bosom – and ill brooking a partner in her woe: "This at least prevent, O princes, and thou for whom the child of our own bed has been flung to ruin; remove that hated woman from the funeral rites! Why does she offend his mother with her accursed presence, and who herself thus in my ruin?" Thus spake she and fell silent, and her complainings ceased. Even so when a wild beast has seized or shepherd borne away to the cruel shrine a bullock cheated of its first milk, whose strength is yet but frail and whose vigour is drawn but from the udder, the despoiled mother stirs now the valley, now the stream, now the herds with her moanings, and questions the empty meads; then it irks her to go home, and she leaves the desolate fields the last of all, and turns unfed from the herbage spread before her.

[195] But the father hurls with his own hand upon the pyre his glorious sceptre and the emblems of the Thunderer, and with the sword cuts short the hair that fell o'er back and breast, and with the shorn tresses covers the frail features of the infant where he lies, and mingles with tender tears such words as these: "Far otherwise, treacherous Jupiter, did I once consecrate these locks to thee, and held me to my vow, shouldst thou have granted me to offer therewith my son's ripe manhood at thy shrine; but the priest confirmed it not,

and my prayer was lost; let his shade, then, who is worthier receive them!" Already the torch is set to the pyre, and the flame crackles in the lowest branches; hard is it to restrain the frenzied parents. Danaans are bidden stand and with barrier raised of weapons shut out afar from their vision the awful scene. The fire is richly fed: never before was so sumptuous a blaze; precious stones crack, huge streams of molten silver run, and gold oozes from out the embroidered raiment; the boughs are fattened with Assyrian juices, pale saffron drops hissing in the burning honey; foaming bowls of wine are outpoured, and beakers of black blood and pleasant milk yet warm from the udder.

[213] Then squadrons seven in number – a hundred tall knights in each – led by the Greek-born kings themselves with arms reversed, circling leftward in due manner purify the pyre, and quell with their dust the shooting flames. Thrice accomplished they their wheeling course, then with resounding clash of arms on arms four times their weapons gave forth a terrible din, four times the handmaids beat their breasts in womanly lament. The other fire receives half-dead animals and beasts yet living; here the prophet bids them cease their wailing, ominous of fresh disaster, although he knows the signs are true; rightward they wheel and so return with quivering spears, and each throws some offering snatched from his own armour, be it rein or belt he is pleased to plunge into the flames, or javelin or helmet's shady crest. [Around, the countryside is filled with the hoarse cries of wailing, and piercing trumpets rend the earth. Loud shouts affright the groves; even so do the bugles tear the Martian standards from the ground, while eager still is cool, and the sword unreddened with blood, and the first face of battle is made fair and glorious: high on a cloud stands Mavors, uncertain yet which host to favour.]

[234] The end was come, and weary Mulciber was sinking now to crumbling ash; they attack the flames and douse the pyre with plenteous water, till with the setting sun their toils were finished; scarce did their labour yield to the late-coming shadows. And now nine times had Lucifer chased the dewy stars from heaven, and as often changed his steed and nightly heralded the lunar fires – yet he deceives not the conscious stars, but is found the same in his alternate risings; 'tis marvellous how the work has sped! there stands

a marble pile, a mighty temple to the departed shade, where a row of sculptured scenes tells all his story: here Hypsipyle shows the river to the weary Danaï, here crawls the unhappy babe, here lies he, while the scaly snake writhes angry coils around the hillock's end; one would think to hear the dying hisses of his blood-stained mouth, so twines the serpent about the marble spear.

[249] And now Rumour is summoning a multitude eager to behold the unarmed battles; called forth from every field and city they come; they also gather together, to whom the horror of war is yet unknown, and they who through weary age or infant years had stayed behind; never were such clamouring throngs on the strand of Ephyre or in the circus of Oenomaus.

[256] Set in a green ring of curving hills and embraced by woodland lies a vale; rough ridges stand about it, and the twin summits of a mound make a barrier and forbid issue from the plain, which running long and level rises with gentle slope to grassy brows and winding heights soft with living turf. There in dense crowds while the fields were still rosy in the dawn, the warrior company took their seats; there the heroes delight to reckon the number of the motley multitude, and scan the faces and the dress of their fellows, and they fell the glad confidence of a mighty host. Thither they drag a hundred black bulls, the strength of the herd, slow-paced and straining; as many cows of similar hue, and bullocks with foreheads not yet crescent-crowned.

[268] Then the ancient line of great-hearted sires is borne along, in images marvellously fashioned to living likeness. First the Tirynthian crushes the gasping lion against the strong pressure of his breast and breaks it upon his own bones; him the Inachidae behold not without terror, though he be in bronze and their own famous hero. Next in order is seen father Inachus reclining leftward on the mound of a reedy bank and letting the streaming urn flow free. Io, already prone and the sorrow of her sire, sees behind her back Argus starred with eyes that know no setting. But kindlier Jupiter had raised her erect in the Pharian fields, and already was Aurora giving her gracious welcome. Then father Tantalus, not he who hangs above the deceiving waters and snatches the empty wind of the elusive branch, but the great Thunderer's god-fearing guest is borne along.

Elsewhere triumphant in his car Pelops handles the reins of Neptune, and Myrtilos the charioteer grasps at the bounding wheels, as the swift axle leaves him far and farther behind. Grave Acrisius too and the dread likeness of Coroebeus and Danaë's guilty bosom, and Amymone in sadness by the stream she found, and Alcmena proud of the infant Hercules, a threefold moon about her hair. The sons of Belus join their discordant right hands in a pledge of enmity, but Aegyptus with milder look stand near; easy is it to mark on the feigned countenance of Danaus the signs of a treacherous peace and of the coming night. Then follow shapes innumerable. At length pleasure is sated, and prowess summons the foremost heroes to its own rewards.

[296] First came the sweat of steeds. Tell, O Phoebus, the drivers' famous names, tell of the steeds themselves; for never did nobler array of wing-footed coursers meet in conflict: even as serried ranks of birds compete in swift course or on a single shore Aeolus appoints a contest for the wild winds.

[301] Before the rest Arion, marked by his mane of fiery red, is led forth. Neptune, if the fame of olden time be true, was his sire; he first is said to have hurt his young mouth with the bit and tamed him on the sand of the sea-shore, sparing the lash; for insatiable was his eagerness to run, and he was capricious as a winter sea. Oft was he wont to go in harness with the steeds of ocean through the Libyan or Ionian deep, and bring his dark-blue sire safe home to every shore; the storm-clouds marvelled to be outstripped, and East and South winds strive and are left behind. Nor less swiftly on land had he borne Amphitryon's son, when he waged Eurystheus' wars, in deep-pressed furrows o'er the mead, fierce to him also and impatient of control. Soon by the gods' bounty he was deemed worthy to have Adrastus for his lord, and meanwhile had grown far gentler. On that day the chieftain allows him to be driven by his son-in-law Polynices, and much did he counsel him, what arts would soothe the horse when enraged, not to use too fierce a hand, nor to let him gallop free of the rein; "urge other steeds," said he, "with voice and goad; but he will go, ay, faster than you wish." Even so, when the Sun granted the fiery reins and set his son upon the whirling chariot, with tears did he warn the rejoicing youth of treacherous stars and

zones that would fain not be o'errun and the temperate heat that lies midway between the poles; obedient was he and cautious, but the cruel Fates would not suffer him to learn.

[326] Amphiarus, next favourite for the prize, aloft in his chariot drives Oebalian steeds; thy progeny, Cyllarus, stealthily begotten while far away by the mouth of Scythian Pontus Castor was exchanging for the oar the Amyclean rein. Snow-white his own raiment, snow-white are the coursers that lend their necks to the yoke, his helm and fillet match the whiteness of his crested plume. Admetus, too, the fortunate, from Thessalian shores, can scarce restrain his barren mares, of Centaur's seed, as they tell (so scornful, methinks, are they of their sex, and their natural heat turns all to body's vigour). White with dark flecks, they resemble day and night: so strongly marked was each colour, nor unfit were they to be deemed of that stock which stood spellbound at the piping of the Castalian reed, and scorned their pasture when they heard Apollo play.

[340] Lo! the young sons of Jason, too, their mother Hypsipyle's new-found pride, took stand upon the chariots wherein each rode, Thoas, bering the name of his grandsire, proper to his race, and Euneos, called from Argo's omen. In everything were the twins alike, in looks, in car and steeds, in raiment, and in the harmony of their wishes, either to win or to lose only at a brother's hands. Next ride Chromis and Hippodamus, the one born of mighty Hercules, the other of Oenomaus: it were doubtful which drove more madly. The one has horses bred by Getic Diomedes, the other a yoked pair of his Pisean sire, both chariots are decked with cruel spoils and drip with ghastly blood. For turning-points there stood here a bare oak-trunk, there a stone pillar, arbiter of husbandmen; betwixt either bound there lay a space thou mightest reach with four times a javelin's cast, with thrice an arrow's flight.

[355] Meanwhile Apollo was charming with his strains the Muses' glorious company, and, his finger placed upon the strings, was gazing down to earth from the airy summit of Parnassus. First he recounts the deeds of the gods – for oft in duty bound he had sung of Jove and Phlegra and his own victory o'er the serpent and his brothers' praises – and then reveals what spirit drives the thunderbolt

or guides the stars, whence comes the fury of the rivers, what feeds the winds, what founts supply the unmeasured ocean, what pathway of the sun hastens or draws out the course of night, whether earth be lowest or in mid-heaven and encompassed by yet another world we view not. There he ended, and puts off the sisters, eager though they are to listen, and while he fastens bay about his lyre and the woven brilliance of his coronet, and ungirds his breast of the pictured girdle, he hears a clamour, and beholds not far away Nemea famed for Hercules, and there the mighty spectacle of a four-horsed chariot-race. He recognizes all, and by chance Admetus and Amphiarus had taken their stand in a field hard by. Then to himself he spake: "What god has set those two princes, Phoebus' most loyal names, in mutual rivalry? Both are devoted to me, and both are dear; nor could I say which holds first place. The one, when I served as thrall on Pelian ground – such was Jove's command, so the dark Sisters willed – burnt incense to his slave, nor dared to deem me his inferior. The other is the companion of the tripods and the devout pupil of the wisdom of the air: and though the first has preference by his deserts, yet the other's thread is near its distaff's end. For Admetus is old age ordained, and a late death; to thee no joys remain, for Thebes awaits thee and the dark gulf. Thou knowest it, unhappy one: long since have my own birds sung thy doom." He spoke, and tears bedewed the face that scarce any sorrow may profane; then straightway came he to Nemea, bounding radiant through the air, swifter than his father's fire and his own shafts. Long had he reached the earth, yet still his tracks remain in heaven, and still athwart the zephyrs his path gleams bright.

[389] And now Prothous had shaken the lots in a brazen helmet, and each had his place and order at the starting. The heroes, each his country's glorious boast, and the coursers, a match to them in glory, all alike of blood divine, stand penned by the one barrier, hopeful, daring yet fearful, anxious yet confident. All is confusion in their hearts; they strive, yet are afraid, to be gone, and a thrill of courage mixt with dread runs through them to the extremities of their limbs. The steeds are as ardent as their masters: their eyes dart flame, they loudly champ the bits, and blood and foam corrode the iron; scarce do the confining posts resist their pressure, they smoke and pant in

stifled rage. Such misery is it to stand still, a thousand steps are lost ere they start, and, on the absent plain, their hooves ring loud. Around stand trusty friends, smoothing out the twisted tangled manes, and speak heartening words and give much counsel. The Tyrrhenian blast rang in their ears, and all leapt forward from their places. What canvas on the deep, what javelins in war, what clouds so swiftly fly across the heavens? less violent are winter streams, or fire; slower fall stars or gather rains, more slowly flow the torrents from the mountain-summits.

[410] As they sped forth the Pelasgi saw and marked them; now are they lost to view, now confused and hidden in one cloud of blinding dust; they can see nothing for the press, and scarce by shout of name can they recognize each other. Then some draw clear of the throng, and each takes place according to his strength; the second lap blots out the former furrows, and now stooping forward in their eagerness they touch the yoke, now with straining knees they bend double, tugging at the reins. On the shaggy necks the muscles swell, and the breeze combs back the erect manes, while the dusty ground drinks up the white rain of foam. The thunder of hooves and the gentler sound of running wheels are blended. Never idle are their arms, the air hisses with the oft-plied lash; no more densely spatters the hail from the cold North, nor streams the rain from the Olenian horns.

[424] By instinct had Arion guessed that another driver stood grasping the reins, and feared, innocent as he was, the dire son of Oedipus; from the very start he rages more fiercely than his wont, fretting angrily against his burden. The sons of Inachus think him fired by praises, but it is the charioteer that he is flying, the charioteer that he threatens in maddened fury, and he looks round for his lord on all the plain. Amphiaraus follows him, yet far before the rest and by a long space second, and level with him runs Thessalian Admetus; the twins are together, now Euneos to the fore, now Thoas, and in turn give ground and go ahead, nor ever does ambitious love of glory set at variance the devoted brothers. Last of all fierce Chromis and fierce Hippodamus contend, not lacking skill, but the weight of their coursers retards them; Hippodamus, leading, feels the panting breath of the following steeds, and their hot wind upon his shoulders. The seer of Phoebus hoped by drawing tight his rein and turning close

around the goal to gain first place; and the Thessalian hero too feels hope glow nearer, while Arion, defying control, dashes here and there in circles and strays rightward from the course. Already Oeclides was in front and Admetus no longer third, when the sea-born steed, at last brought back from his wide circuit, overtakes and passes both, their triumph but short-lived; a loud crash rises to the sky, and heaven trembles, and all the seats flashed bare, as the crowd sprang to their feet. But the son of Labdacus in pale anxiety neither handles the rein nor dares the lash: just as a steersman, his skill exhausted, rushes upon waves and rocks alike, nor any more consults the stars, but flings his baffled art to the mercy of chance.

[454] Again at headlong speed they swerve right-handed from the track into the plain, and strive to keep their course, and again comes the shock of axle on axle, wheel on wheel-spokes; no truce is there, nor keeping faith; a lighter task, one would think, were war, savage war, and bloodshed, such furious will to victory is theirs, such fear and threats of death; and many a hoof is struck as it runs crosswise o'er the plain. Neither goads nor lashes now suffice, but with shout of name does Admetus urge Iris and Pholoë and steaming Thoë, and the Danaan augur chide fleet Aschetos and Cygnus well so-called. Strymon too hears Chromis, son of Hercules, and fiery Aethion Euneos; Hippodamus provokes slow Cydon, Thoas entreats piebald Podarces to greater speed. Only Echion's son keeps gloomy silence in his erring car, and fears to confess his plight by cries of alarm.

[459] Scarce was the real struggle of the steeds begun, and yet now they are entering the fourth dusty lap, and now steaming sweat is pouring from their exhausted limbs, and fiery thirst leaves and gasps forth the thick breath of the horn-footed steeds; and now their vigour flags, and their flanks are racked with long-drawn pantings. Then first does Fortune, long time doubtful, dare to step in to make decision. Thoas, pressing madly on to pass Haemonian Admetus, falls, nor does his brother aid him; fain would he, but Martian Hippodamus forestalled him and drove his team between them. Next Chromis by Herculean vigour and all his father's strength holds Hippodamus with axles interlocked, as he wheels inside him past the goal; in vain the steeds struggle to get free, and strain their sinewy necks and bridles. As when the tide holds fast Sicilian craft and a strong South

wind impels them, the swelling sails stand motionless in mid-sea. Then Chromis hurls his rival from the shattered car, and had sped on the foremost, but when the Thracian horses saw Hippodamus lying on the ground, that awful hunger comes back upon them, and already had they shared in their mad lust his trembling frame, had not the Tirynthian hero, forgetful of victory, taken their bridles and dragged away the neighing steeds, and left the field vanquished but praised of all.

[491] But Phoebus hath long desired for thee, Amphiaraus, thy promised honours. At last, deeming the moment fit to show thee favour, he visits the grim spaces of the dusty course, when now the race is nearing its end, and for the last time victory hovers doubtful; a snake-tressed monstrous phantom, of visage terrible to behold, whether he wrought it in Erebus or for the cunning purpose of the moment, certainly endowed with countless terrors – this horrid plague he raises to the world above. The guardian of dusky Lethe could not have beheld it unterrified, nor the Eumenides themselves without a deep thrill of fear, it would have overturned the horses of the sun in mid-career, and the team of Mars. When golden Arion saw it, his mane leapt up erect, and he halts with upreared shoulders and holds high suspended his yoke-fellow and the steeds that shared his toil on either side. Straightway the Aonian exile is flung backward head-over-heels: he drops the reins, and the chariot, freed from restraint, dashes far away. But past him as he lies on the crumbling earth sweep the Taenarian car and the Thessalian axle and the Lemnian hero, and just avoid him by swerving in their flight. His friends rush up, and at last he lifts his dazed head and reeling limbs from the ground, and returns, scarce hoped for by his father-in-law Adrastus.

[513] How timely then, O Theban, had been thy death, had not stern Tisiphone forbidden! How grievous a war couldest thou have prevented! Thebe had bewailed thee and thy brother made show thereof, and Argos too had mourned, and Nemea and Lerna and Larissa had in suppliant guise shorn tresses for thee, thou hadst excelled Archemorus in funeral pomp.

[518] Then Oeclides, although the prize was now sure for him as he followed, since masterless Arion held first place, yearned yet with

keen desire to pass even the empty chariot. The god lends strength and refreshment; swifter than the East wind he flies, as though the barrier were but just fallen and he were starting on the race, and calling aloud on nimble Caerus and snow-white Cygnus, plies their necks with blows and shakes the reins upon their backs. Now at least, when nobody is in front, the fiery axle devours the course, and the scattered sand is thrown afar. The earth groans, and even then savagely threatens. And perchance Arion too had owned defeat and Cygnus taken first place, but his ocean-sire suffers him not to be defeated; thus by a just division the glory remained for the horse, but the prophet gained the victory. His meed of triumph was a Herculean bowl, borne by two youths; the Tirynthian on a time was wont to take it in one hand, and with head flung back quaff it foaming, whether victorious over a monster or in the field of Mars. Fierce Centaurs has it, cunningly wrought, and fearful shapes in gold: here amid slaughter of Lapithae are stones and torches flying, and again other bowls; everywhere the furious anger of dying men; he himself seizes the raging Hylaeus, and grips him by the beard and wields his club. But for thee, Admetus, is brought for thy deserving a cloak with a flowing border of Maeonian dye, stained many a time with purple; here swims the youth contemptuous of Phrixean waters, and gleams with sea-blue body through the pictured wave; one sees the sideward sweep of his arm, and he seems about to make the alternate stroke, nor would one think to find his hair dry in the woven fabric. Yonder high upon the tower sits anxiously watching, all in vain, the Sestian maid; near her the conscious lamp droops and flickers. These rich rewards Adrastus bids be given to the victors; but his son-in-law he consoles with an Achaean handmaid.

[550] Then he incites those heroes who are speediest of foot to strive for ample rewards: a contest of agility where prowess is frailest, fit pursuit for peace, when sacred games invite, nor useless in war as a refuge should power of arm fail. Before all the rest Idas leaps to the front, whose temples were lately shaded by Olympian wreaths; the youth of Pisa and the bands of Elis hail him with applause. Alcon of Sicyon follows, and Phaedimus, twice acclaimed the victor of the sands of Isthmus, and Dymas, who once outstripped the flight of wing-footed steeds, but now they outran him by reason

of retarding age. Many too, whom the ignorant multitude received in silence, came forward from this side and from that. But for Parthenopaeus the Arcadian they call aloud, and arouse murmurs that roam throughout the close-packed circus. Well know is his parent for speed of foot; who cannot tell of the peerless renown of Atalanta, and of those footprints that no suitor could o’ertake? The son bears all his mother’s glory, and he himself, already known to fame, is said to catch on foot the defenceless hinds in the open glades of Mount Lycaeus, and, as he runs, to o’ertake the flung javelin. Long expected, at last darts he forward, leaping lightly o’er the companies, and unfastens the twisted golden clasp of his cloak. His limbs shine forth, and all his graceful frame is revealed, his fine shoulders, and breast as smooth and comely as his cheeks, and his face was lost in his body’s beauty. But he scorns the praise of his fairness, and suffers not admirers to come near him. Then he cunningly sets to work with the draughts of Pallas, and makes his skin tawny with rich oil. Thus do Idas and Dymas and the rest shine sleek and glossy. So when the starlight glitters on a tranquil sea, and the spangled heaven is mirrored tremulous in the deep, brilliant is every star, but more brilliant than the rest does Hesperus shoot his beams, and brightly as he flames in the high heavens, so bright is his reflection in the dark-blue waves. Idas is next in beauty, nor much slower in speed, next older too in years; but for him already has the palaestra’s oil brought on the tender growth, and the down is creeping o’er his cheeks, nor yet confesses itself among the cloud of unshorn locks. Then they duly try their speed and sharpen up their paces, and by various arts and feigned excitement stir their languid limbs; now they sink down with bended knees, now smite with loud claps their slippery breasts, now ply their fiery feet in short sprint and sudden stop.

[593] As soon as the bar fell, and left the threshold level, they nimbly dashed away and the naked forms gleamed upon the plain; more slowly seemed the swift coursers to move of late on the same ground: one might deem them so many arrows poured forth from Cydonian host or flying Parthians. Not otherwise speed the stags over Hyrcanian wilds, hearing, or fancying that they hear, a famished lion roar afar; blind fear drives them in crowding panic-stricken flight, amid the ceaseless noise of clashing horns. Then swifter than

the rapid breeze the Maenalian boy outstrips the sight, and hard behind him fierce Idas runs and breathes upon his shoulder and presses close upon his rear with panting breath and over-shadowing form. After them Phaedimus and Dymas strive in doubtful contest, near them fleet Alcon. The yellow hair hung down from the Arcadian's unshorn head; this from his earliest years he cherished as a gift to Trivia, and vainly boasting had vowed it to his country's altars, when he should return in triumph from the Ogygian war. At that time, freed from its band and streaming loose behind, it flies backward as it meets the wind, at once hindering his own speed, and spreading out in front of his rival Idas. Thereat the youth bethought him of deceit and an opportunity for fraud; already close upon the goal, even while Parthenopaeus is triumphantly crossing the threshold, he grasps his hair, and pulling him back seizes his place, and is the first to breast the wide entrance of the goal.

[618] The Arcadians cry "To arms!" and with arms they hasten to defend their prince, if the lost prize and merited honour be not restored, and make ready to descend on all the course. Others again were pleased by the ruse of Idas. Parthenopaeus himself pours showers of earth upon his face and streaming eyes, and the comeliness of tears is added to his beauty. In his grief he rends with bloody nails now his breast, now his innocent cheeks and guilty hair, while all around discordant clamour rages, and old Adrastus halts irresolute of counsel. At last he speaks: "Cease quarrelling, youths! your prowess must be tried again; but run not in one track only; Idas has this side; keep thou apart yonder, and let there be no cheating in the race!"

[631] They heard, and abide by his command. Then the youth of Tegea with silent prayer humbly entreats the gods: "Goddess, queen of the woodlands, for to thee and to thine honour these locks of mine are vowed, and from this vow comes my disgrace; if my mother or I myself have deserved well of thee in hunting, suffer me not, I pray thee, to go ill-omened thus to Thebes, or to have won such bitter shame for Arcadia." Clear proof was given that he was heard. The plain scarce feels him as he goes, his feet treads tenuous air, and the rare footsteps hover and leave the dust unbroken. With a shout he dashes to the goal, with a shout he runs back to the chief, and seizing

the palm appeased his grief. The running was over, and prizes for their toils stand ready. The Arcadian is given a horse, the shameless Idas bears away a shield, the rest go contented with Lycian quivers.

[646] Then he invites any who may wish to try the issue with the hurled quoit, and display untiring vigour and proud strength. At his command goes Peterelas, and with all his body bent scarce lays down beside him the slippery weight of the bronze mass; in silence the sons of Inachus look on and estimate the toil. Soon a number rush forward: two of Achaean race, three sons of Ephyre, one Pisa-born, the seventh an Acarnanian; and more was the love of glory urging on, had not tall Hippomedon, incited by the crowd, come forward, and carrying another broad disk at his right side: "Take this one rather, ye warriors, who are marching to shatter walls with stones, and to overthrow the Tyrian towers, take this one! As for that other, any hand can toss that weight!" and with no effort he caught it up and threw it to one side. They fall back in amaze and confess themselves undone; scarce Phlegyas alone and eager Menestheus, compelled by sense of shame and noble ancestry, vouchsafed to try their strength; the rest of their own accord gave place, and returned inglorious, marvelling at the disk. Even so the shield of Mars on the Bistonian plain reflects an evil light on Mount Pangaeus, and shining strikes the sun with terror, and deeply clangs beneath the spear of the god.

[668] Phlegyas of Pisa begins the toil; straightway he drew all eyes upon himself, when they beheld his frame, such promise of great deeds was there. And first with earth he roughens the quoit and his own hand, then shaking off the dust turns it right skilfully to see which side best suits his fingers, or fits more surely the middle of his arm. This sport had he ever loved, not only when he attended his country's famous festival, but he was wont to reckon the space between Alpheos' either bank, and, where they are most widely distant, to clear the river nor ever wet the disk. At once, then, confident in his powers he measures, not the rough acres of the plain, but the sky's expanse with his right arm, and with either knee bent earthward he gathers up his strength and whirls the disk above him and hides it in the clouds. Swiftly it speeds aloft, and as though falling grows faster as it mounts; at last exhausted it returns to earth more slowly from the height, and buries itself in the field. So falls,

whenever she is torn from the astonished stars, the darkened sister of the sun; afar the peoples beat the bronze for succour, and indulge their fruitless fears, but the Thessalian hag triumphant laughs at the panting steeds who obey her spell. The Danaï shout applause, though amid thy frowns, Hippomedon, and he hopes for a mightier throw along the level.

[691] But thereupon Fortune, whose pleasure it is to dash immoderate hopes, assails him; what power has man against the gods? Already he was preparing a mighty throw, his head was turned and all his side was swinging back: the weight slipped and fell before his feet and baffled his throw, and his hand dropped empty and unavailing. All groaned, while to a few the sight brought pleasure. Menestheus then, more cautious, brings careful skill to the attempt, and uttering many a prayer to thee, O son of Maia, corrects with dust the slippery surface of the powerful mass. With far better fortune it speeds from his huge hand, nor falls till it has covered no mean extent of the course. They applaud, and an arrow is fixed to mark the spot. Third, Hippomedon with slow and ponderous step advances to the labours of the contest; for deep in his heart he takes warning from the fate of Phlegyas and the good fortune of Menestheus. He lifts the instrument of combat that his hand knew well, and holding it aloft summons up the strength of his unyielding side and vigorous arms, and flings it with a mighty whirl, springing forward after it himself. With a terrific bound the quoit flies through the empty air, and even in its flight remembers the hand that flung it and keeps to its due path, nor attains a doubtful or a neighbouring goal as it passes the defeated Menestheus, but far beyond the rival sign it falls to earth, and makes tremble the green buttresses and shady heights of the theatre, as though they were falling in vast and widespread ruin; even so from smoke-emitting Aetna did Polyphemus hurl the rock, though with hand untaught of vision, yet on the very track of the ship he could but hear, and close to his enemy Ulixes. Thus too the Aloidae, when rigid Ossa already trod Olympus under foot, bore icy Pelion also, and hoped to join it the frightened heaven.

[722] Then the son of Talaus bids a tiger's skin go as prize to the victor: all glossy it shone with a yellow border, and its sharp claws were tamed with gold. Menestheus receives a Gnosian bow and

errant shafts. "But to thee, Phlegyas," he cries, "whom unlucky fortune foiled, we give this sword, once the glory and aid of our Pelasgus, nor will Hippomedon grudge it thee. And now is courage needed; wield ye the terrible cestus in close conflict; valour here comes nighest to that of battle and the sword."

[731] Argive Capaneus took his stand – awful in aspect, awful the terror he inspires – and, binding on his arms the raw ox-hide black with lumps of lead, himself no softer, "Send me one," says he, "from all those thousands of warriors; and would rather that my rival were of Aonian stock, whom it were right to slay, and that my valour were not stained with kindred blood." They stood aghast and terror made them silent. At last Alcidas, unexpected, leapt forth from the naked crowd of Laconians, while the Dorian princes marvel; but his comrades knew he relied on his master Pollux, and had grown up in the wrestling-school of a god. Pollux himself guided his hands and moulded his arms – love of the sport constrained him – and of the set him against himself, and admiring him as he stood up in like mood caught him up exultant, and pressed his naked body to his breast. Capaneus thinks scorn of him and mocks at his challenge, as though in pity, and demands another foe; at last perforce he faces him, and now his languid neck swells at anger's prompting. With bodies poised at their full height they lift their hands, deadly as thunderbolts; safe withdrawn are their faces on their shoulders, ever watching, and closed is the approach to wounds. The one is as great in broad expanse of every limb and terrible in size of bone as though Tityos should rise up from the Stygian fields, did the fierce birds allow him; the other was lately but a boy, yet his strength is riper than his years, and his youthful vigour gives promise of a mighty manhood; him would none wish to see defeated nor stained with cruel gore, but each man fears the spectacle with eager prayers.

[760] Scanning each other with their gaze and each awaiting the first opening, they fell not at once to angry blows, but stayed awhile in mutual fear, and mingled caution with their rage; they but incline their arms against each other as they spar, and make trial of their gloves, dulling them with mere rubs. The one, more skilfully trained, puts by his fury, and taking thought for the future delays and husbands up his strength; but the other, prodigal of harm and reckless

of his powers, rushes with all his might and in wild blows exhausts both arms, and attacks with fruitless gnashing of teeth, and injures his own cause. But the Laconian, prudent and crafty, and with all his country's vigilance, now parries, now avoids the blow; sometimes by the throwing back or rapid bending of his head he shuns all hurt, now with his hands he beats off the aimed assault, and advances with his feet while keeping his head drawn back. Often again, as his foe engages him with superior power – such strength is in his cunning, such skill in his right hand – with bold initiative he enters his guard and overshadows him, and towering high assails him. Just as a mass of water hurls itself headlong on a threatening rock, and falls back broken, so does he wheel round his angry foe, breaking his defence; look! he lifts his hand and threatens a long time his face or side, and thus by fear of his hard weapons diverts his guard and cunningly plants a sudden blow, and marks the middle of his forehead with a wound; blood flows, and the warm stream stains his temples. Capaneus, yet ignorant, wonders at the sudden murmur of the crowd, but when, as he chanced to draw his weary hand across his face, he saw the stains upon the cowhide, no lion nor tiger feeling the javelin's smart was e'er so mad; hotly he drives the youth before him in headlong retreat over the whole field, and is forcing him on to his back; terribly he grinds his teeth and whirls his fists in countless repeated blows. The strokes are wasted on the winds, some fall on the gloves of his foe; with active movement and aid of nimble feet the Spartan eludes the thousand deaths that shower about his temples, yet not unmindful of his art he flees still fighting, and though fleeing meets blows with blows.

[796] And now both are wearied with the toil and their exhausted panting; slower the one pursues, nor is the other so swift to escape; the knees of both fail them and alike they rest. Thus when long wandering o'er the sea has wearied the mariners, the signal is given from the stern and they rest their arms awhile; but scarce have they taken repose, when another cry summons them to the oars again. Lo! a second time he makes a furious dash, but the other tricks him and goes at him with a rush of his own and sinking into his shoulders; forward he pitches on his head, and as he rises the merciless boy smote him another blow and himself grew pale at the success. The

Inachidae raise a shout louder than the noise of shore or forest. But when Adrastus saw him struggling from the ground, and lifting his hands, intent on hideous deeds; "Haste, friends, I pray you, he is mad! hasten, prevent him! he is out of his mind – quick! bring the palm and the prizes! He will not cease, I see well, till he pounds the brain within the shattered skull. Rescue the doomed Laconian!" At once Tydeus darts forth, and Hippomedon, obedient to command; then scarce do the two with all their might master his two arms and bind them fast, and forcefully urge him: "Leave the field, thou art victorious; 'tis noble to spare the vanquished. He too is one of us, and a comrade in the war." But no whit is the hero's fury lessened; he thrusts away the proffered branch and the cuirass, and shouts: "Let me free! Shall I not smash in gore and clotted dust those cheeks whereby that eunuch-boy gained favour, and send his unsightly corpse to the tomb and give cause for mourning to his Oebalian masters?" So says he, but his friends force him away, swelling with wrath and protesting that he has not conquered, while the Laconians praise the nursling of famed Taygetus, and laugh loud at the other's threats.

[826] Long time have the varied deeds of valour and his own conscious worth provoked with urgent stings great-hearted Tydeus; both at the quoit and in speed of foot did he excel, nor less was he a champion of the boxing-glove, but before all other sports the anointed wrestling-match was dear. Thus had he been wont to spend the leisure intervals of fighting and relax his martial ire, and with mighty heroes on the banks of Achelous did he strive, heaven-taught, in many a victorious bout. Therefore when keen ambition called the youths to wrestle, the Aetolian puts off the terrible covering of native boar-hide from his shoulders. Against him Agylleus, who boasts of Cleonaeon stock, raises his tall limbs, no less in bulk than Hercules, so loftily he towers with huge shoulders and monstrously surpasses human measure. But he lacks his father's close-knit strength of body; loose-limbed and overgrown is he, unsteady and soft of muscle; hence is Oenides boldly confident to overthrow so mighty an antagonist. Though slight himself to look upon, yet he is heavy of bone and hard and sinewy of arm: never did nature dare enclose so fiery a spirit or so great force in so small a frame.

[847] When their skins had taken pleasure in the oil, both ran forward to the middle of the plain and clad themselves in showers of sand; then with the dust they dry their wet limbs in turn, and sink their necks into their shoulders and hold out their arms wide-branching. At once Tydeus with cunning craft stoops his own body, his knees near touching the sand, and so draws down the tall Agylleus and makes him bend to his own level. But just as the cypress, queen of the Alpine height, inclines her summit to the south wind's pressure, scarce holding by her root, and nears the ground, yet soon springs up again into the air – not otherwise does towering Agylleus of his own will force down his huge limbs and groaning bend double over his little foe; and now, first one, then the other, their hands attack brow and shoulder and side and neck and breast and legs that evade the clutch. Sometimes they hang a long while locked in each other's grip, now savagely they seek to break the fingers' clasp. Less fiercely do two bulls, the leaders of the herd, make war; in the meadow stands the fair white heifer and awaits the victor, while their breasts are torn in the mad struggle, and love plies the goad and heals their wounds; so do boars fight with flashing tusks, so do ugly bears grasp shaggy hides in hairy conflict.

[870] So violent is Oenides; neither dust nor heat of sun makes his limbs faint and weary, but his skin is close-knit and firm, and schooled by toil to hard muscle. But the other, unsound in wind, pants heavily, and breathes sickly gasps in his exhaustion, and the caked sand runs off him in streams of sweat, while furtively he snatches support for his body from the ground. On him Tydeus constantly presses, and feinting at his neck catches at his legs, but his arms were baffled by their shortness and failed in their design, while all the other's towering height came down upon him, and crushed and buried him under the huge falling mass. Just as when the Iberian miner burrows beneath a hill and leaves far behind the living day, then, if the suspended ground has rocked and the tunnelled earth crashed down with sudden roar, overwhelmed by the fallen mount he lies within, nor ever does his crushed and utterly broken corpse deliver up the indignant soul to its own skies. More vigorous is Tydeus than his foe, and superior in spirited valour; nor is it long before he has slipped from the other's hold and unequal weight, and

encompassing him as he hesitates fastens suddenly on his back, then swiftly enfolds sides and groin in a firm embrace and grips his knees between his thighs, and relentlessly, as he struggles in vain to escape from the grasp and force his hand against his side – a burden wonderful and terrible to see – raises him aloft. So, fame tells, did Hercules hold fast in his arms the sweating earth-born Libyan, when he found the trick and snatched him up on high, and left him no hope of falling, nor suffered him to touch even with his foot's extremity his mother earth.

[897] A shout arises and glad applause from the multitude. Then, poising him aloft, suddenly of his own will he loosed him and threw him sideways, and following him as he fell seized his neck with his right hand and his middle between his legs. Thus beset, his spirit fails, and only shame drives him to struggle. At last he lies extended, with breast and belly prone on the ground, and a long time after sadly rises, leaving the marks of his disgrace on the imprinted earth. But Tydeus, bearing the palm in his right hand and in his left the prize of shining armour: "What if the plain of Dirce held not no small measure of my blood – as well ye know – where of late these scars made treaty with Thebes?" So speaking he displays the scars, and gives to his comrades the glorious rewards that he had won, while the spurned corselet follows Agylleus from the field.

[911] There are some, too, who advance to combat with the naked sword. And already were they taking their stand, fully armed, Agreus from Epidaurus, and the Dircaean exile, not yet doomed by fate. But the chieftain, the son of Iasus, forbids them: "Great store of death remains, O youths, preserve your warlike temper and your mad desire for a foeman's blood. And thou, for whose sake we have laid bare our ancestral acres and our beloved cities, given not, I pray thee, such power to chance before the fight begins, nor – may the gods forbend it! – to thy brother's prayers." Thus he speaks, and enriches them both with a golden helm. Then lest his son-in-law lack praise, he bids his lofty temples be garlanded, and himself proclaimed aloud victor of Thebes: the dire Fates echoed back the ominous sound.

[924] The monarch himself also do the princes urge to dignify with some exploit of his own the festal contests, and to confer this final honour on the tomb; they bid him lest one victory be lacking to the

number of the leaders, to shoot Lyctian arrows from his bow, or to cleave the clouds with the slender spear. Gladly he accedes, and thronged about by the foremost warriors descends from the green mound to the level plain; his armour-bearer at command bears after him his light quiver and his bow: he prepares to shoot the circus' mighty length, and to plant wounds upon an appointed ash-tree.

[934] Who will deny that omens flow from the hidden causes of things to come? The fates lie open to mankind, but we choose not to take heed, and the proof foreshown is wasted; thus turn we omens into chance, and from hence Fortune draws her power of harm.

[938] The fateful arrow in a moment measured the plain and struck the tree, and then – awful to behold! – came back through the air it but now had traversed and turning homeward from the goal kept on its way, and fell by the mouth of its well-known quiver. Much talk the princes interchange in error: some say the clouds and the winds on high did meet and drive the shaft, others that the impact of the wood repelled it. Deep hidden lies the mighty issue and the awful truth foretold: to its master only did the arrow vouchsafe survival, and a sad returning from the war.

BOOK 7

[1] As thus they tarried at the outset of the Tyrian war, Jupiter turned on the Pelasgians his wrathful gaze and shook his head, at the movement of which the high stars tremble and Atlas cries that his shoulders' burden is increased. Then thus did he address the speedy Tegean: "Go, boy, and swiftly leaping glide through the North as far as the Bistonian dwellings and the snowy constellations of the pole, where the Parrhasian feeds her Ocean-barred fires on storm-clouds and Heaven's own rain. And there, whether Mars has laid aside his spear and draws breath again – though repose be hateful to him – or whether, as I think, he has his arms and his trumpets, whereof he never tires, and is wantoning in the blood of his beloved tribe, haste thou to deliver the angry message of his sire, and spare nought. Surely long since was he bidden to inflame the Inachian host, and all that the rock of Isthmus holds apart and the thunderous wrath of echoing Malea encompasses; yet scarce hath their army passed the boundary of their walls and they hold sacred festival; one would deem they had returned from war, so keen is their applause, as they attend the rites of an offended tomb. Is this thy rage, Gradivus? The round quoit crashes and reverberates, and the Oebalian gloves meet in the boxing-match. But if he really hath that boasted fury and mad joy in battle, then ruthlessly will he lay innocent towns in ashes, wielding sword and fire, and strike the peoples to the ground while they implore the Thunderer, and exhaust the miserable world. Now he is lenient in warfare and he grows slack though I am angry: but if he hastens not the fight and hurls not, more swiftly than the word of my command, the Danaan ranks against the Tyrian walls – with nought cruel do I threaten him – let his power be all for kindliness and goodness, and his ungoverned rage be slackened to quietness and peace, let him return me his horses and his sword, nor have right of bloodshed any more: I will look upon the earth and bid all cease from strife; for the Ogygian war Tritonia will suffice."

[34] He had spoken, and the Cyllenian was drawing nigh the fields of Thrace; down-gliding from the gate of the Northern pole he is driven this way and that by the region's everlasting tempest and the

serried storm-clouds ranged athwart the sky and the first blasts of Aquilo: the pouring hail rattles upon his golden robe and ill does the shady hat of Arcady protect him. Here he observes barren forests, the sacred haunts of Mars – and he shudders as he looks – where on the far slopes of Haemus his savage mansion is ringed by a thousand furies. The walls are of iron structure, iron portals bear upon the threshold, the roof is carried by columns wrought of iron. The rays of Phoebus are weakened when they meet it, the very light fears that dwelling, and its murky glare dismays the stars. Fit sentinels hold watch there: from the outer gate wild Passion leaps, and blind Mischief and Angers flushed red and pallid Fear, and Treachery lurks with hidden sword, and Discord holding a two-edged blade. Threatenings innumerable make clamour in the court, sullen Valour stands in the midst, and Rage exultant and armed Death with blood-stained visage are seated there; no blood but that of wars is on the altars, no fire but snatched from burning cities. All around were spoils of every land, and captured peoples adorned the temple's high front, and fragments of iron-wrought gates and ships of war and empty chariots and faces ground by chariot-wheels, ay, almost even their groans! truly every form of violence and wounds. Himself was everywhere to behold, but nowhere with softened looks; in such wise had Mulciber with divine skill portrayed him: not yet had the adulterer, made manifest by the sun's bright beams, atoned his shameful union in the bed's grasping chains.

[64] Scarce had the winged Maenalian begun to seek the temple's lord – lo! earth trembles, and horned Hebrus bellows and stays his torrent's flow; then all the war-steeds that troubled the valley sped foaming o'er the frightened meads, sure sign of his approach, and the gates barred with everlasting adamant flew open. Glorious in Hyrcanian gore he himself comes riding by; far and wide the dire bespattering changes the aspect of the fields, behind him are borne spoils and weeping throngs; forest and deep snows give him room; with bloody hand dark Bellona guides the team and plies them hard with her long spear. The offspring of Cyllene grew stiff with terror at the sight, and cast down his eyes: ay, even the Father himself would feel awe, were he present, and would forgo his threats nor command so sternly. First spake the Lord of War: "What decree of Jove, what

message bringest thou from the vast heaven? For not of thine own will comest thou, O brother, to this clime and to my wintry storms, thou whose home is dewy Maenalus and the kindlier air of warm Lycaeus." He reports his sire's resolve. Nor does Mars long delay, but drives forward his flying steeds, all panting as they were and sweating together 'neath the yoke, himself indignant that the Greeks were sluggish to begin the war. The Father on high beheld, and abating now his anger let his head sink with slow weight: as when the East wind sinks to rest and leaves the waters it has vanquished, yet even in calm the waters swell and the departed storm yet rolls the surface of the deep; not yet have the vessels all their tackling set, nor do the mariners draw a full breath again.

[90] The funeral rites had brought an end to the unarmed combats, but the crowds were not gone away, when amid universal silence the hero Adrastus poured wine upon the ground and propitiated the ashes of Archemorus: "Grant, little one, that this day may be renewed at many a triennial feast; let not maimed Pelops prefer to seek Arcadian altars or knock at Elean temples with his ivory arm, nor the serpent rather glide to the Castalian shrine, nor its own shade of the pine-groves of Lechaëum. We refuse thee, O child, to sad Avernus, and link these mournful rites with the undying stars, we who hurry now to arms. But if thou wilt grant us to overthrow the Boeotian dwellings with the sword, then a mighty temple shall exalt thee, then shalt thou be a god indeed, nor through Inachian cities only shall thy worship spread, but Thebes also in her captivity shall swear by thy name." So vowed the chief for all, so vowed each warrior for himself.

[105] Already Gradivus with forward-straining steeds was trampling the Ephyrean shores, where Acrocorinthus raises his summit into the airy heights and casts his shadow over the twin seas in turn. Then he orders Panic, one of his fearful train, to go before the horses: none more skilled than he to insinuate gasping terror and to steal courage from the heart; voices and hands innumerable has the monster, and aspects to assume at will; all-persuasive is he, and his onslaughts drive cities mad with horror. If he suggests that there are two suns, or that the stars are falling, or the ground heaving, or ancient forests marching down from the hills, alas! the wretches

believe that they have seen it. A new and cunning trick was he then devising: he raises a phantom dust upon the plain of Nemea; astounded the chiefs behold above their heads the darkening cloud; he swells the tumult with unsubstantial clamour and imitates the clank of armour and the tread of horses' hooves, and scatters the terrible war-cry upon the wandering breezes. Their hearts leap in fear, and the crowd wait muttering in suspense: "Whence comes the noise? – unless our ears betray us. But why stand the heaven in a cloud of dust? surely the Ismenian soldiery have not dared so far? Ay, 'tis even so; they come! But is Thebes then so bold? Must they wait, think you, for us to pay rites to sepulchres?"

[127] Thus Panic in their bewildered minds: and many a different countenance does he assume amid their ranks, now is he one of a thousand men of Pisa, now a Pylian, now a Laconian by his look, and he swears the foe are near, and dismays the host with vain alarm. To their terror nought is false. But when undisguised he fell upon the distracted warriors, and, borne on a swift whirlwind around the heights of the sacred vale, thrice brandished his spear, thrice smote his steeds, thrice clashed his shield upon his breast, "to arms, to arms," they cry, each snatching in wild disorder his neighbour's or his own, and they seize other helms and force strange steeds beneath the yoke; in ever heart burns the mad lust of death and slaughter, nothing hinders their fiery rage; in furious haste they atone for their delays. Such a clamour fills the shore when the wind is rising, and men are leaving the port; everywhere sails are bellying and loose ropes flapping, and now the oars are afloat and every anchor too upon the surface, and now from mid-sea they are gazing back at the land they love and at the friends left far astern.

[145] Bacchus had seen the Inachian cohorts gather swiftly for the march; with a groan he turned towards the Tyrian city, and he recalls the home that nurtured him and his father's fires, with sadness in his heart and dismay upon his bright countenance; disordered were his locks and garlands, the thyrsus was fallen from his hand the untouched grapes from off his horns; tearful then and unsightly as he was with dishevelled robe, he stood before Jupiter – reigning then by chance alone in heaven – in such guise as had never before been seen – yet his sire knew well the cause – and spake in supplication:

“Destroyest thou thine own Thebes, O worthy father of the gods? is thy spouse so cruel? pitiest thou not that well-loved land, that hearth thou didst deceive, those ashes I hold dear? Be it so, once thou didst hurl unwilling fire from the clouds – so I believe – but lo! a second time art thou bringing deadly fire upon the land, without oath of Styx or cunning paramour’s request. What limit wilt thou set? Art thou my father, and incensed against me? Kindly, and yet dost wield the thunderbolt? Not in such mood wouldst thou go to Danaë’s city, or the Parrhasian grove, or Amyclae, Leda’s home. Am I then in truth the worst-scorned of all thy sons? Yet am I surely he, who was a sweet burden for thy carrying, for whom thou deignedst to open once more life’s threshold and the way once closed against me, and the period of the womb. Moreover, my people are unwarlike, and rarely schooled in camps, and know my warfare only, my battles, the twining of garlands in their hair and twirling to the frenzied pipe; they fear the wands that brides wield, the wars that matrons wage. How should they endure the bray of trumpets and the work of Mars, who makes – behold him! – such furious preparation? What if he were to lead thy own Curetes to the fight, and bid them decide the issue with their guileless targes? Nay more, ’tis hated Argos thou choosest – was there no other foe? Ah! cruel, O father, is our peril, but more cruel thy command! We pay the penalty, to make rich my stepmother’s Mycenae. I yield! But my ruined people’s sacred rites, and aught that my mother left when she brought forth but for the tomb – whither must we depart? to Thrace and the forests of Lycurgus? or shall I flee a captive to that India where I once did triumph? Grant the outlaw some resting-place! My brother could make Delos fast, Lato’s rocky home – nor do I grudge him that – and entrust it to the lowest depths; the Tritonian removed the hostile waters from her beloved citadel; myself I have seen Epaphus lording it over Eastern races, and remote Cyllene and Minoan Ida fear not the trumpet’s blast; why do our altars so offend thee? Here – since my own influence must already yield – here were those nights of Hercules’ begetting, and the favoured flame of wandering Nycteis, here was the race of Tyre and the bull more fruitful than my lightning-brand: protect at least Agenor’s offspring!”

[193] Smiling at his jealousy his father raised him quietly to his

embrace from where he knelt with arms outstretched, and in turn makes tranquil answer: "This comes not by my consort's will, as thou thinkest, my son, nor am I thus a slave to her fierce demands; 'tis fate's unchanging wheel that ordains our destiny; ancient causes are leading, now late in time, to war. Whose anger sinks so soon to rest, who is more sparing of human blood? The heavens and my eternal age-long dwelling witness how often I lay by the whirling thunderbolt, how rarely these fires have mastery of the earth. Unwillingly indeed, though they had suffered great wrongs that cried for vengeance, did I deliver the Lapithae to Mars or ancient Calydon to Diana for destruction; sad is the loss, and 'tis irksome to give so many new lives for old, and animate afresh so many bodies. But for the seed of Labdacus and the sons of Pelops' line, them am I slow to destroy; thou knowest thyself – to leave unsaid the Dorian crimes – how ready is Thebes to accuse the gods; thee too – but my former anger is appeased and I will hold my peace. Pentheus was stained by no father's blood nor bore the guilt of defiling his mother's bed and begetting brothers, yet he filled thy haunts with the mangled fragments of his limbs: where then were these tears, this eloquent appeal? But it is to glut no private wrath that I sacrifice the sons of Oedipus: earth and heaven demand it, and natural piety and injured faith, and the laws of the Avenging Powers themselves. But be not distressed for thy city; not at this time have I decreed that the Aonian state shall fall, a darker age shall come hereafter, and others to avenge; now royal Juno shall complain."

[222] He hearing this was composed in mind and aspect; as when rose-gardens droop 'neath a fiery scorching sun and cruel South wind, should the day clear and Western breezes refresh the sky, all their beauty returns, the blooms open resplendent, and the unsightly branches are decked in their proper glory.

[227] Long since has the messenger brought sure tidings of discovery to the astounded ears of Eteocles, announcing that the Grecian chiefs are on the march at the head of a long array, and soon will be nigh the Aonian fields; wheresoever they advance, all tremble and pity Thebes; he reports the family and fame of each and their warlike deeds. The king hiding his fear demands to be told and hates the teller; then he decides to send a stirring message to his allies and

to take the measure of his own resources. Mars – so it pleased Jove – had stirred up Aonia and Euboea and the neighbouring lands of Phocis; far flies the rapid signal from town to town; they march forth their hosts and display themselves in arms; they move upon the plain that, doomed to war, spreads near the city and awaits the fury of the fray. They meet no foe as yet, but matrons in an excited throng ascend the walls, and thence show to their children the glittering armour and their sires' formidable arms.

[243] Far removed upon a lonely tower and still withheld from the eyes of the people, Antigone shrouds in a black veil her tender cheeks; with her was an attendant, Laius' squire of old, whom the royal maid reveres. She first addressed him: "Is there hope, O father, that these standards will hold the Pelasgians in check? We hear that all the tribes of Pelops descend upon us; recount, I pray, the princes and their foreign bands, for I see what standards our own Menoeceus, and what troops our Creon hath under command, and how Haemon with towering crest of brazen Sphinx marches out from the mighty Homoloian gates." So spake artless Antigone, and old Phorbas thus replied: "Dryas, look! leads forth a thousand archers from cold Tanagra's hill: he whose snow-white armour bears a trident and a fire-brand rudely wrought in gold, is for valour the true son of exalted Orion: heaven forged the ill omen of his sire, and chaste Diana's ancient grudge! Ocalea and Medeon join our camps and declare for our monarch's cause, and thickly-wooded Nisa and Thisbe echoing with Dione's tuneful birds. Next is Eurymedon who counterfeits the pastoral arms and horsehair crest of his father Faunus with club and leaves of pine; terrible is he in the woodland, and such, I ween, will he be in the bloody conflict. Erythrae rich in flocks is with us, and so are they who hold Scolos, and Eteonos set thick with arduous ridges, and the brief strand of Hyle, and the proud folk of Schoenos, Atalanta's home, who till the famous plain her feet imprinted: they brandish as of wont the long ashen Macedonian shafts, and targes that scarce can ward off savage blows. But lo! the Neptunian folk of Onechestus rush on with shouts: they whom Mycalessos nourishes beneath her pines, and Melas, Pallas' stream, and Gargaphie with the waters loved of Hecate, and they on whose young wheat Haliartos looks jealously, o'ergrowing the glad

cornlands with too abundant grass. Unfashioned tree-trunks are their weapons, and lions' empty jaws their helmets, the curving bark affords them bucklers. These, as they lack a king, our own Amphion, look! is leading – 'tis easy to recognize him, O maid – conspicuous with a lyre and our ancestral bull upon his helm. A blessing on thy courage, youth! he is ready to go where swords are thickest, and protect with naked breast the walls he loves. Ye too come to add your strength to ours, ye Heliconian throng, and thou, Permessus, and Olmius, happy in your tuneful streams, ye have armed your unwarlike sons. Now heartest thou thy people exult in strains worthy of their home, such strains as, when pale winter yields, the swans uplift in praise of smiling Strymon. Onward, valiant ones! your praise shall never die, and Muses in songs unending shall recount your wars."

[200] He had finished, when the maiden briefly spake in turn: "But those yonder, what tie of birth unites those brethren? So truly alike are their arms, so rise their helmet-peaks into the air together; would that my brothers had such concord!" Smiling the old man answered her: "Thou are not the first, Antigone, to be so deluded in thy seeing; many have called them brethren, for their years deceive. Father and son they are, though the fashions of age are all confounded: the nymph Dercetis in burning passion and shameless lust of wedlock corrupted ere his time the boy Lapithaon, still innocent of the marriage bed and unripe for a lover's flames; and soon was born the fair Alatreus, and overtakes his father while still in the flower of youth, and assumes his features and confounds their years. So now they rejoice in the false name of brethren, but more the father; for the past has brought him pleasure as well as the years to come. Three hundred knights doth the sire marshal for the fray, and the son as many more; these, they say, have left scant Glisas and Coronias, once their husbandmen, Coronias rich in harvest, Glisas fertile in the grape.

[309] "But rather look at Hypseus casting his shadow far o'er his lofty steeds, his left side guarded by the sevenfold bull's-hide of his shield, his breast by triply woven mail; his breast, for no fear hath he for his back. His spear is an ancient glory of the woodland: once thrown it always cleaves armour and flesh alike, and his hand fails never of its aim. Asopos is deemed his sire, a father worthy to behold, when in full torrent he sweeps past the wreck of bridges, or

in swollen wrath and vengeance for his maiden daughter he lashes his waters to fury and scorns the Thunderer her paramour. For they say that Aegina was carried by force from her father's stream and hidden in the embrace of Jove; the river in wild rage prepares fierce war against the stars – not yet had even the gods such licence –; in defiant, quenchless anger he stood and strove, nor had he any whose aid he could implore, till, scarce subdued by the threefold lightning of the brand, he yielded. Even yet doth the proud flood rejoice from out his heaving banks to pant forth 'gainst heaven fiery ashes, the signs of his dire punishment, and Aetnaean vapours. Such fury shall we marvelling see in Hypseus on the Cadmean plain, if but Aegina has happily appeased the Thudnerer. He leads the men of Itone and Minerva's Alalcomenaeon bands, and those whom Midea furnishes and Arne rich in grapes, the men who sow the fields of Aulis and of Graea and verdant Plataeae, and subdue Peteon with furrows and hold – where it is ours – Euripus whose current ebbs and flows, and thee, Anthedon, remotest of our lands, where from the grassy shore Glaucus plunged beneath the waters that summoned him, sea-green already in face and hair, and started to behold the fish-tail growing from his waist. They whirl the sling and cleave the zephyrs with the bullets: their javelins will outstrip fleet arrows.

[340] Thou too, Cephissus, wouldst have sent Narcissus, pre-eminent in beauty, but already, stubborn-hearted boy, he is a pale flower in a Thespian field: thou, O father, dost lave it with thy childless waves. Who could recount to thee the troops of Phoebus and of ancient Phocis? Panope, Daulis, Cyparissos, they valleys, Lebadia, and Hyampolis that nestles beneath a beetling cliff, the husbandmen who with their bulls upturn Parnassos' either slope and Cirrha and Anemoria and the woodland of Corycia, and Lilaea that sends forth the ice-cold springs of Cephissus, whither Python was wont to take his panting thirst and turn aside the river from the sea: on all their helms behold the entwined bay, on all their armour Tityos or Delos or the quivers that he god emptied here in countless slaughter. Their leader is warlike Iphitus, whose father lately slain was Naubolus, son of Hippasus, thy friend, most gentle Laius: still was I holding the chariot-reins, without thought of ill, when thy neck lay mangled by cruel blows beneath the horses' hooves – would that my blood had

flowed there too!”

[359] His eyes were moistened as he spoke, and all his face grew pale, and sudden sobs checked the free passage of his voice; his ward soothes the trembling old man’s friendly heart; he recovers and faintly speaks: “O thou, my anxious pride and chiefest pleasure, Antigone! ’tis for thee I shamelessly delay my late-arriving death, though perchance I must behold the crimes and murders of thy house repeated, until I deliver thee unharmed and fit for wedlock: that is enough; then, O Fates, let me leave this weary life. But while I am feebly swooning, what mighty champions – ah! now I see them again – have passed before us! Clonis I numbered not, nor the long-haired sons of Abas, nor thy men, rocky Carystus, nor low-lying Aegae and lofty Caphereus. But now my dimmed sight says me nay, and all have halted, while thy brother, look! bids the armed hosts be silent.”

[374] Scarce had the old man ended upon the tower, when the prince began from a high mound: “Great-hearted chieftains, whom I your leader would not refuse to obey and fight, a common soldier for my native Thebes, no attempt were mine to stir your zeal – for freely have ye rushed to arms and of your own accord taken oath to champion my righteous anger – nor shall I suffice to praise enough or pay you worthy thanks – the gods and your own victory o’er the foe will make requital; from friendly peoples are ye come to protect a city assailed by no pillaging warrior from foreign shores, no stranger from an alien land, but a native enemy, who as he marshals his opposing camps has here a father and a mother and sisters of one blood, ay, and a brother had he too. Lo! with what guilt thou plottest destruction everywhere against thy father’s race; but the Aonian peoples have come willingly to my aid, nor, cruel one, am I left to be thy victim. What yonder army wills, thou too shouldest be feeling: they forbid me to give up the throne.” Thus he spoke, and orders all things duly, who are to meet the foe, who to guard the walls, what troops shall lead the van, whom he shall place in mid-array. Even so does a shepherd, while the earth is fresh and the rays are shining through the doorways, unfasten the wattled pens; he bids the leaders go first, then follow the crowding ewes; he himself aids those that are with young, and the parents whose udders trail the ground, and bears to their mothers’ side the failing lambs.

[398] Meanwhile the Danai by day and night and night and day march under arms: wrath bears them onward; they scorn repose, scarce sleep or food delays them, like a fleeing army they haste toward the foe. They heed not the portents that chance, the herald of doom, with ominous presage strews thickly in their path; for birds and beasts give awful warnings, stars also and backward flowing rivers, and the Father thunders against them and baneful lightnings gleam; terrifying voices are heard in the shrines, and temple gates shut of their own accord; now it rains blood, now stones, ghosts suddenly appear and sires of old confront them weeping. Then too did Apollo's oracle at Cirrha fall silent, and all night through in months unwonted did Eleusis wail, and prophetic Sparta saw in open temples – fearful sight! – the brethren of Amyclae locked in conflict. The Arcadians say that in the silence of the night Lycaon's shade barked madly, and hiss own Pisa tells that Oenomaus drove o'er that cruel plain; Achelous, maimed of either horn, was dishonoured by the Acarnanian exile. Sad is the image of Perseus to which Mycenae prays, and downcast is Juno's ivory statue; the rustics tell how mighty Inachus bellowed, and the dweller by the double main how Theban Palaemon made lament over the whole sea. The Pelopean phalanx hears these warnings, but warlike ardour hinders heavenly counsels and robs them of their terror.

[424] Already they were come to thy banks, Asopus, and the Boeotian streams. The squadrons dared not cross the hostile river forthwith; by chance too he was descending in mighty flood upon the trembling fields, whether the rain-bringing bow or mountain clouds had given him strength, or whether the river-sire so purposed and hurled his stream athwart them to forbid their arms. Then fierce Hippomedon with a great tearing of the bank thrust down his wavering steed, and supported by reins and trappings shouts from mid-stream to the leaders left behind: "Forward, ye men! And I will be the first, I warrant you, to lead the attack and break through the Theban ramparts." All fling themselves into the river, ashamed to have but followed. Just so do cattle stand dismayed when the herdsman drives them to an unknown stream; far distant seems the other bank, and fear stretches wide between; but when the chieftain bull leaps in and makes the crossing, then gentler seem the waters,

and easier to plunge, and the banks seem to draw nearer.

[441] Not far from thence they mark a ridge and suitable ground for a safe camp, whence too they can behold the city and the Sidonian towers; the situation pleased them and offered secure retreat upon a high and spreading hill, with open swelling fields beneath nor any other mountains near at hand to overlook; no weary toil added long lines of earthworks, for nature herself marvellously favoured the spot. Rocks rose to form a rampart, and the shelving earth served for trenches, and four chance mounds made bastions: the rest they themselves provide, until all the light had left the hills, and sleep gave rest to weariness.

[452] What words could portray the consternation of Thebes? In the face of war's impending doom dark night racks her with sleepless terror and threatens her with the coming day. Men hurry hither and thither on the walls; in that awful panic nought seems guarded or secure enough, no strength is in Amphion's fortress. Rumour announces other foes on every side, and Fear yet more and mightier; yonder they see the Inachian tents and foreign watch-fires in their own native hills. Some pray and entreat the gods, others exhort their weapons of war and battle-steeds, others weeping embrace the hearts they love and piteously appoint their pyres and funeral honours for the morrow. If their eyes are closed in a brief slumber, they are waging war; distraught they now sicken of life, now prize delay; they pray for the light, yet fear its coming. Tisiphone, shaking her twin serpents, goes rioting through either camp; brother against brother she inflames and against both their sire: aroused he wanders far from his secret cell, and implores the Furies and prays for his lost eyes once more.

[470] Already had breaking day put out cold Phoebe and the fading stars, while Ocean was pregnant with dawning fire, and the sea's expanse, revealed by new-born Titan, was sinking to rest beneath his radiant panting steeds: lo! Jocasta, wild-eyed, with hoary unkempt hair falling about her haggard face, her bosom bruised and livid and in her hand a branch of olive entwined with sable wool, goes forth from the gates in all the mighty majesty of sorrow, like to the most ancient of the Furies. On this side and on that her daughters, now the better sex, support her as she hastens her aged limbs and would fain

go faster than her strength allows. She goes to meet the foe, and baring her breast she strikes upon the gates and with tremulous wail prays for admittance: "Unbar the road! it is the guilty mother of the war who asks you; some right to utter curses in this camp have I by virtue of this womb." The squadrons started with alarm beholding her, and hearing her, yet more; and now the messenger sent to Adrastus returns; at his command they receive her, and open a way through the swords' midst.

[488] As soon as she saw the Achaean princes, she uttered a fearful cry of rage and grief: "Ye Argive chiefs, who will show me the enemy whom I bore? Under what helm – tell me – shall I find my son?" Thus frantic she is met by the Cadmean hero, who clasps her to him and sheds tears of joy, and holding her in his arms consoles her, and ever and anon repeats "mother!" "mother!" entreating now herself, now his beloved sisters – when the aged dame mingles sharp anger with her weeping: "Why this pretence of unmanly tears and venerable names to me, O Argive prince? Why dost thou put thy arms about my neck, and crush thy hated mother against this mail-clad breast? Art thou that wandering exile, that hapless stranger? Whose heart wouldest thou not stir? Far-stretching cohorts await thy word and countless blades glitter at thy side. Ah! we unhappy mothers! Is this the son whom I wept for day and night? Yet if thou hast respect for the counsel of thy kinsfolk, now, while the armies are silent, and natural affection shrinks irresolute from war, I thy mother command thee and entreat: come with me, and look at least on thy country's gods and the homes which soon must burn, and, thy brother – why dost thou look away? – speak to thy brother and demand thy realm with me now for arbiter: either he will grant it, or thou wilt resume the sword with better right. Or fearest thou, lest there be treachery, and I thy mother purposely deceive thee? Not so wholly ahs righteousness fled our unhappy house; scarce shouldst thou have to fear if Oedipus led thee. Sinful verily was my marrying and my bringing forth, but I love you even so – ah! bitter grief! – and even now forgive your fury. But if thou dost persist so far, of our own accord we give thee to the victory, cruel one! Seize thy sisters and bind their hands behind them, load me with chains; thy sire shall also be brought hither, aged though he be. And now to your sense of

shame, ye sons of Inachus, I turn my sad appeal; for ye have left at home, each one of you, little ones and aged parents and tears like these: believe in a mother's feelings! If my son here has grown dear to you so soon – and I pray he may be dear – what must I feel, Pelasgians, how must this bosom suffer! This might I have borne from Hyrcanian or Odrysian princes, and those whose frenzy surpassed my own. Grant my request, or may I die here with my arms around my son, nor live to see this war.”

[527] The proud cohorts quailed before her words, and one could have seen the warriors' helmets quaking and their armour bedewed with pious tears. As when lions with furious impact have strewn men and weapons on the ground, straightway their wrath abates, and they rejoice to sate their hunger untroubled on the captured pray: so the Pelasgians' hearts are swayed and waver, and their fiery greed of battle grows tame.

[534] He himself, even before their eyes, turns to kiss now his mother, now Ismene plain of speech, now Antigone more tearful in her appeal, and in the varied tumult that distracts his mind the kingdom is forgot; he would fain go, nor does kindly Adrastus forbid him; then Tydeus, mindful of righteous anger, breaks in upon him: “Send me rather, comrades, who lately made trial of Eteocles' word, though not his brother, send me to face the king, whose boasted peace and honest covenant I yet bear on this breast of mine. Where then was the mother, mediator of peace and honour, when ye stayed me that night with such noble welcome? Is it to such intercourse thou dost drag thy son? Take him to that field which reeks yet richly of Theban blood, and richly yet of mine. Wilt thou follow her so far, too soft of heart, alas! and too forgetful of thy friends? Forsooth, when bared blades flash all round thee in hostile hands, her tears shall lay those swords to rest? Fool that thou art, will he send thee back to the Argive camp, once safe within his walls and at the mercy of his hatred? Ere that will this lance shake off its point and burgeon, or Inachus and my own Achelous flow backward. But 'tis gentle speech that thou art seeking, and peace amid savage arms: well, this camp too is open to thee, nor has yet merited fear. Or am I suspected? then I depart and make a present of my wounds. Let him enter: here too will he find mother and sisters to mediate. But suppose that utterly

defeated he quits his covenanted realm: wilt thou surrender it a second time?" The troops, swayed by his words, veer round again; as when in a sudden hurricane the South wind swooping down wrests from Boreas the mastery of the sea. The rage of battle finds favour once more; fierce Erinyes seize the moment and sows the seed of opening conflict.

[564] Two tigers were straying by Dirce's waters, gentle yoke-fellows, whose warlike chariot had once laid waste the East, but Liber, lately triumphant from Erythraean shores, had suffered them to roam in Aonian fields. The followers of the god and, as of wont, an aged priest are zealous to adorn them, forgetful now of bloodshed and redolent of Indian herbs, with full-grown shoots and varied clusters of the vine, and deck their spotted hide with bands of purple. And by now the very hills and even – who would believe it? – the cattle loved them, and the lowing heifers ventured near; for no hunger drives them to fell deeds, they take their food from hands ready to feed them, and throw back their terrible heads to quaff the wine outpoured; they wander at peace over the countryside; and whenever with placid gait they come into the city, every home and every temple glows with sacrificial fire, and all believe that Lyaeus himself has entered. These did the Fury touch, three times each, with her snaky lash, and stung them to their former mood of madness; they dash forth, and the fields know them not. As when from opposing tracts of heaven two lightning-brands burst forth together, and falling trail through the clouds their length of hair: not otherwise do they with rapid course and furious roar bound o'er the plains, with a mighty spring seize they charioteer, Amphiaraus – nor was it without ill omen, that by chance he was first driving his master's horses to a neighbouring mere – then assail Taenarian Idas, following, and Aetolian Acamas; the horn-footed steeds flee madly over the fields, until Aconteus, kindling at the sight of heroes slain – an Arcadian was he, of wonted valour in the chase – pursued them, now making for their trusted walls, with thick-flung darts, and plying many a spear drove thrice and again the poised javelin through their backs and flanks. But they with a long trail of streaming blood bear fainting to the gates the darts that pierced them, and uttering human wails lean their wounded bodies on the walls they love. One would

think the city and its shrines were being plundered, and the Sidonian homes were ablaze with accursed fire, such clamour arises when the gates are opened; rather would they that the cradle of great Hercules had perished, or Semele's bower or Harmonia's bridal chamber. Phegeus, votary of Bacchus, rushes with drawn sword on Aconteus, now weaponless and exulting in his victims twain; the youth of Tegea dash up in tardy succour, but already on the sacred bodies of the beasts the youth lies dead, and sorrowing Bacchus is avenged.

[608] The Grecian council too is broken up in the sudden tumult of the camp: Jocasta flees through the enemy, already in battle trim; no longer dares she supplicate; they, of late so courteous, now spurn her and her daughters, and Tydeus is quick to use the moment: "Away with you, now hope for peace and honest dealing! Surely he could have waited and delayed the outrage till his mother had returned in safety?" So speaking he bares his blade and calls to his comrades. And now fierce shouts are raised, and on every side wrath boils to fever-heat; the host assembles in disorder, chiefs are confounded with the common soldiers, and leaders' commands unmarked; horsemen, infantry in troops and rapid chariots are intermixed, and an indiscriminate mob urges the rout, nor is there time to display themselves nor scan the foe. Then in sudden swarms the youth of Thebes and Argos engaged; standards and bugles are in the rear, and the trumpets must needs follow to find the battle. So great waxes the conflict from so little bloodshed! Even so the wind gathers its earliest strength within the clouds: gentle as yet, it sways the leaves and the unprotected summits, but soon it has torn away the forest and laid the dark mountain bare to view.

[628] Come now, Pierian sisters, 'tis of no far-off deeds we bid you tell, sing your own country's wars, your own Aonia; for ye beheld while Mars raged near and the quills of Helicon shook at the blaring of Tyrrhenian bronze.

[632] The horse of Sidonian Pterelas, untrustworthy in battle, carries his rider, tearing at the reins, through the enemy's lines; and now he is free, so weary is his master's arm, when through his shoulder the spear of Tydeus flies, and pierces the youth's left thigh and nails him swooning to his seat; away he dashes, pinned to his dead lord, and bears him on, though no more he holds weapon or

bridle: even as a Centaur, not yet bereft of both his lives, sinks on his own back in death. They vie with each other in the deadly work: in furious interchange Hippomedon lays Sybaris low, Menoeceus Pylian Periphas, Parthenopaeus Itys: Sybaris falls a victim to the reeking blade, fierce Periphas to the spear-point, Itys to a treacherous arrow. Marvortian Haemus severs with a blow the neck of Inachian Caeneus: his eyes wide-opened seek the trunk across the cloven wound, his spirit the head; already Abas was spoiling him as he lay, when caught by an Achaean shaft he left fall in death his foeman's buckler and his own.

[649] Who persuaded thee, Euneus, to desert thy Bacchic worship and the groves a priest may never leave, and to change thy Bromian frenzy? Whom couldst thou make afraid? Pale ivy-wreaths of Nysa garland the weak texture of thy shield, and a while riband is fastened to thy vine-wood javelin. Tresses hide his shoulders, and the down is yet growing on his cheeks; his corslet blushes unwarlike with threads of Tyrian dye, he wears bracelets upon his arms and embroidered sandals on his feet, and is garbed in linen folds; a smooth golden clasp bites with a tawny jasper stone his Taenarian cloak, whereon rattle the nimble bow-case and the bow and the hanging quivers of gold-embroidered lynxes' hide. Crazed by the god he goes through the midst of thousands, and cries afar: "Stay your hands! these walls Apollo revealed by the good omen of Cirrha's heifer! Forbear! rocks came willingly of their own accord to form them. A sacred race are we: Jove is this city's son-in-law, and its father-in-law is Gradivus: Bacchus and great Alcides we truly call our children."

[668] Amid boasts so vain fierce Capaneus meets him, a tall spear in his hand. And as at break of day a lion in his gloomy lair stirs up his fresh-awoken fury, and spies from the grim cave a hind or bullock with yet unwarlike forehead, and leaps forth with joyous roar, though assailed by the spears of hunting bands, but he sees his prey and knows not of his wounds: so then did Capaneus exult in the unequal conflict and poised for the throw the great weight of his cypress-spear. Yet first he cries: "Why, doomed one, doest thou affright our troops with womanly howls? Would that he for whom thou ragest would come himself to battle! Go, bawl that message to thy Tyrian dames!" and therewith he flung the spear, which in its

flight, as though no force could meet and stay it, scarce rang upon the shield and already had passed clean through his back. His weapons fall, the gold resounds with long choking sobs, blood streams forth and overflows his bosom. Thou art fallen, bold youth; thou too, one favourite more of Aonian Lyaeus, art fallen. Thee languid Ismarus lamented with broken wands, thee Tmolus and fruitful Nysa mourned, and Naxos of Theseus' fame, and Ganges, that in fear swore fealty to Theban orgies.

[688] Nor was Eteocles found a sluggard by the Argolic bands, but Polynices' sword, more sparing, shrank from his countrymen. Before the rest Amphiaraus shines pre-eminent, although already his horses fear the ground, and 'mid clouds of dust he upturns the indignant plain; Apollo sadly sheds a vain lustre upon his servant, and makes his last hours glorious. His shield too and his helm he sets afire with starry splendours, nor, Gradivus, wert thou slow to grant thy brother than no human hand, no mortal weapon should have power to harm the seer, but that he should go to Dis sacred and venerable in death. In such wise, conscious himself of doom, he is borne into the thickest of the fray; the assurance of death gives him new strength, his limbs grow mightier and the sky more favourable, nor ever knew he so well to read the heavens, had he but leisure: but Valour, near the neighbour of death, turns his gaze away. He glows with an insatiable love of savage War and revels in his might, and his fiery soul exults. Is this he who so oft alleviated the lot of man and made the Fates powerless? How quickly changed from him who was skilled to follow the guidance of tripod and of bay, to salute Phoebus and learn the import of the birds in every cloud! Like some pestilence or adverse ray of baleful star, his sword offers up to his own shade a host innumerable. With a javelin he slays Phlegyas and proud Phyleus, with scythed chariot he mows down Clonis and Chremetaon, the one standing to fight him, the other he severs at the knee; with spear-thrust Chromis and Iphinous and Sages and unshorn Gyas and Lycoreus sacred to Phoebus – the last unwillingly: already had he driven home the ashen strength of the spear when the falling crest revealed the fillet – with a stone Alcathous, to whom by the meres of Carystus was home and wife and his children who loved its shores. Long had he lived a poor searcher of the waters: earth played

him false, and dying he praises the storms and winds, and the more welcome dangers of the familiar sea.

[723] Long has Asopian Hypseus beheld from far the slaughter of the scattered rout, and burned to stay the tide of battle, though he himself not less has put to flight Tirynthian forces; but the sight of the augur made him heed the present carnage less: for him his warlike spirit yearns. A dense phalanx of the foe bars his way: then proudly he makes ready a javelin, chosen from his father's banks, and first exclaims: "O bounteous lavisher of Aonian streams, Asopus, yet renowned for the ashes of Giants, give power to this right hand; thy son and the oaken nursling of thy river ask thee; if thou didst strive with the Sire of all the gods, I may despise Phoebus. All his armour will I sink in thy waters, and the sad fillets from the augur's head." His father heard him, but Phoebus would not suffer him, fain though he was, to grant the prayer, and turns the blow aside upon Herse the charioteer. He falls, and the god himself takes up the straying reins, assuming the feigned shape of Haliacmon of Lerna. Then indeed no squadrons try to resist his fiery course, but flee in terror unalloyed, and in their panic they die a coward's death unwounded; 'tis doubtful to the view onward by the burden. So when a cloud-encompassed mountain-side is loosened by the fresh storms of winter, or by irresistible decay of age, it crashes down upon the plain, a fearful terror, and sweeps away in many a track of ruin fields, husbandmen, and aged oaks, and at length, its furious rush exhausted, either scoops out a vale or bars a river in mid-course. Not otherwise does the chariot, burdened by the great warrior and the mighty god, drive furiously through many a scene of bloodshed. From his seat the Delian guides both reins and weapons, and instructs his aim; he turns aside hostile darts and cheats the flying javelins of their fortune. Menaleus on foot is overthrown, and Antiphus, no whit defended by his lofty steed, and Aëtion, born of a nymph of Helicon, and Polites, ill-renowned for a brother's murder, and Lampus, who tried to defile the couch of the priestess Manto: against him Phoebus with his own hand sped holy arrows. And now the horn-footed steeds snort at the corpses in alarm and probe the ground, and every wheel-track runs o'er bodies and reddens deep with severed limbs. Some the remorseless axle grinds unconscious,

but others half-dead from wounds – and powerless to escape – see it as it draws nigh to crush them. Already the reins are wet with gore, the slippery care gives no foothold, blood clogs the wheels and trampled entrails hinder the horses' hooves: then the hero himself madly tears out darts abandoned in the slain and spears projecting from the midst of corpses: ghosts shriek and pursue the chariot.

[771] At length, revealing to his servant all his godhead, Apollo said: "Use the light that is thine, and put on eternal fame, while Death irrevocable fears me in thy company. We are overcome: thou knowest that the cruel Fates unravel no threads; depart, long-promised delight of Elysian peoples, thou who of a surety wilt never bend thy neck to Creon's rule, or lie exposed and barred from burial."

[778] The other, taking breath awhile from the fight, makes answer: "Long since knew I, Cirrhaean father, that thou wert seated on my doomed chariot's trembling axle – why such high honour to my hapless plight? – How long wilt thou delay the death that threatens me? Already I hear the flow of rapid Styx, and the dark rivers of Dis and the triple baying of his noxious sentinel. Receive the honours thou didst bestow upon my head, receive the laurels which may not be taken down to Erebus. Now with my last words, if any gratitude be owed to thy prophet ere he depart, I commend to thee, O Phoebus, my betrayed home and the punishment of my wicked spouse and my son's noble rage." Sad at heart Apollo leapt down and turned to hide his tears: then verily groaned the chariot and the horses, thus left desolate. Not otherwise in a blind hurricane at night, when he North-wester blows, does a ship know that she will perish, so soon as the brethren of Therapnae have fled the sials their sister's fire has doomed.

[794] And now little by little the earth began to shudder to its rending, and the surface to rock, and the dust to rise in thicker clouds, already an infernal bellowing fills the plain. In alarm they think it is the battle and noise of conflict, and hasten in their steps: a shock far different hurls arms and warriors and marvelling steeds to earth; already the leafy summits are nodding, and the walls, and Ismenos flees with all his banks exposed to view; their wrath is abated, they fix their swaying weapons in the ground, or wandering

meet and lean on their rocking spears, and start when they see each other's pallor. So when Bellona, scorning the deep, joins ships in battle on the sea, then, should a kindly tempest befall, all look to their own safety, and another death bids all their swords be sheathed, and common fears make peace among them. Such was the appearance of the heaving combat on the plain. Whether the earth, labouring with imprisoned blasts, expelled the pent-up fury of the raging wind, or whether hidden waters ate away and wore down and sapped the crumbling soil, or the fabric of the rolling sky flung that way its weight, or Neptune's trident moved all the ocean and flung too vast a sea upon the shore, or whether that uproar was a tribute to the seer, or Earth threatened the brothers – lo! in a gaping chasm the ground yawns sheer and deep, and stars and shades feel mutual terror. Him the huge abyss engulfs, and swallows the horses as they try to leap across it; he drops neither reins nor weapons, but, just as he was, drove his unshaken chariot down to Tartarus, and as he sank looked back at the heavens and groaned to see the plain meet above him, until a fainter shock joined once more the parted fields and shut out the daylight from Avernus.

BOOK 8

[1] When on a sudden the prophet fell among the pallid shades, and burst into the homes of death and the mysteries of the deep-sunken realm, and affrighted the ghosts with his armed corpse, all were filled with horror and marvelled at the weapons and horses and the body still undecayed upon the Stygian shores: for no fires had whelmed his limbs, nor came he charred from the gloomy urn, but hot with the sweat of war, and gory drops and the dust of the rent plain beflecked his shield. Not yet had the Fury met and purified him with branch of yew, not had Proserpine marked him on the dusky door-post as admitted to the company of the dead; nay, his presence surprised the very distaff of the Fates, and not till in terror they beheld the augur did the Parcae break the thread. At the noise of his coming the care-free Elysian folk gazed round about them, and they whom far in the remoter gulf a deeper night and a blind region of denser shades o'erwhelms. Then sluggish meres and scorched lakes resound with groaning, and the pale furrower of the ghost-bearing stream cries out that a new chasm has cloven Tartarus to its depths and spirits have been let in across a river not his own.

[21] By chance the lord of Erebus, enthroned in the midst of the fortress of his dolorous realm, was demanding of his subjects the misdoings of their lives, pitying nought human but wroth against all the shades. Around him stand the Furies and various Deaths in order due, and savage Vengeance thrusts forth her coils on jangling chains; the Fates bring the souls and with one gesture damn them; too heavy grows the work. Hard by, Minos with his dread brother in kindly mood counsels milder justice, and restrains the bloodthirsty king; Cocytus and Phlegethon, swollen with tears and fire, aid in the judgement, and Styx accuses the gods of perjury. But he, when the frame of the world above was loosened and filled him with unwonted fears, quaked at the appearing stars, and thus did he speak, offended by the gladsome light: "What ruin of the upper world hath thrust the hateful light of day into Avernus? Who hath burst our gloom and told the silent folk of life? Whence comes this threat? Which of my brothers thus makes war on me? Well, I will meet him: confusion

whelm all natural bounds! For whom would that please more? the third hazard hurled me defeated from the mighty heaven, and I guard the world of guilt; nor is even that mine, but lo! the dread stars search it from end to end, and gaze upon me. Does the proud ruler of Olympus spy out my strength?

[42] “Mine is the prison-house, now broken, of the Giants, and of the Titans, eager to force their way to the world above, and his own unhappy sire: why thus cruelly doth he forbid me to enjoy my mournful leisure and this untr tranquil peace, and to hate the light I lost? I will open all my kingdoms, if such be my pleasure, and veil Hyperion with a Stygian sky. I will not send the Arcadian up to the gods – why doth he come and go on errands between realm and realm? – and I will keep both the sons of Tyndareus. And why do I break Ixion on the greedy whirling of the wheel? Why do the waters not wait for Tantalus? Must I so oft endure the profanation of Chaos by living strangers? The rash ardour of Pirithous provoked me, and Theseus, sworn comrade of his daring friend, and fierce Alcides, when the iron threshold of Cerberus’ gate fell silent, its guardian removed. It shames me too, alas! how Tartarus opened a way to the Odrysian plait; with my own eyes I saw the Eumenides shed base tears at those persuasive strains, and the Sisters repeat their allotted task; me too –; but the violence of my cruel law is stronger. Yet I have scarce ventured on stolen journey, nor was that to the stars on high, when I carried off my bride from the Sicilian mead: unlawfully, so they say, and forthwith comes an unjust decree from Jove, and her mother cheats me of half a year. But why do I tell all this?

[65] “Go, Tisiphone, avenge the abode of Tartarus! if ever thou hast wrought monsters fierce and strange, being forth some ghastly horror, huge and unwonted, such as the sky hath never yet beheld, such as I may marvel at and thy Sisters envy. Ay, and the brothers – let this be the first sign of my hatred – let the brothers rush to slay each other in exultant combat; let there be one who in hideous, bestial savagery shall gnaw his foeman’s head, and one who shall bar the dead from the funeral fire and pollute the air with naked corpses; let the fierce Thunderer feast his eyes on that! Moreover, lest their fury harm my realms alone, seek one who shall make war against the gods, and with smoking shield repel the fiery brand and Jove’s own

wrath. I will have all men fear to disturb black Tartarus no less than to set Pelion on top of leafy Ossa.” He finished, and long since was the gloomy palace quaking at his words, and his own land and that which presses on it from above were rocking: no more mightily does Jupiter sway the heaven with his nod, and bow the starry poles.

[84] “But what shall be thy doom,” he cries, “who rushest headlong through the empty realm on a path forbidden?” As he threatens, the other draws nigh, on foot now and shadowy to view, his armour growing faint, yet in his lifeless face abides the dignity of augurship inviolate, and on his brow remains the fillet dim to behold, and in his hand is a branch of drying olive. “If it be lawful and right for holy shades to make utterance here, O thou to all men the great Finisher, but to me, who once knew the causes and beginnings, Creator also! Remit, I pray, thy threatenings and thy fevered heart, nor deem worthy of thy wrath one who is but a man and fears thy laws; ’tis for no Herculean plunder –, such wars are not for me – nor for a forbidden bride – believe these emblems – that I dare to enter Lethe: let not Cerberus flee into his cave, nor Proserpine shudder at my chariot. I, once the best beloved of augurs at Apollo’s shrines, call empty Chaos to bear witness – for what power to receive an oath has Apollo here? – for no crime do I suffer this unwonted fate, nor have I deserved to be thus torn from the kindly light of day; the urn of the Dictæan judge doth know it, and Minos can discern the truth. Sold by the treachery of my wife for wicked gold, I joined the Argive host, not unwitting – hence this crowd of new-slain ghosts thou seest, and the victims also of this right hand; in a sudden convulsion of the earth – my mind still shrinks in horror – thy darkness swallowed me up from the midst of thousands.

[109] What were my feelings, while I made my way on and on through the hollow womb of earth, and while I was whirled along, suspended in shrouding mist? Ah, woe is me! nought of me is left to my country or my friends, nor in the power of Thebes; no more shall I behold the roofs of Lerna, nor shall I return in ashes to my stricken sire. With no pomp of tomb or pyre or kinsmen’s tears, to thee am I come with all my funeral train, nor likely to venture aught with yonder steeds; content am I to receive my shade, nor remember my tripods any more. For what avails thee the use of prescient augury,

when the Parcae spin thy commands? Nay, be thou softened, and prove more merciful than the gods. If ever my accursed wife come hither, reserve for her thy deadly torments: she is more worthy of thy wrath, O righteous lord!" He accepts his prayer, and is indignant that he yields: just as a lion, when the glittering Massylian steel confronts him, then most summons up his anger and his might: but if the foeman fall, to pass over him is enough, and to leave to the vanquished his life.

[127] Meanwhile his chariot, garlanded with sacred wool and victorious bay, and feared but of late for noble feats of arms, is sought in the clear light of day in vain, though by none vanquished and by none put to flight: the troops fall back, and the ground is suspected by all, and the soldiers avoid the traces of the dangerous field; that ill-omened spot of ravenous destruction lies idle, shunned from awe of the hellish abyss. While Adrastus in a different quarter is encouraging his men, Palaemon flies to him with tidings, scarce trusting what he has seen, and cries in terror – for it chanced that he stood nigh the falling seer, and paled, poor wretch! to see the chasm open: "Turn, prince, and flee, if at least the Dorian land yet remains in its place, and our native towers where we left them. No need of arms or bloodshed: why draw we against Thebes the unavailing sword? The impious earth sucks in our chariots and our weapons and men of war; lo! even the field where we stand seems to flee away. With my own eyes I saw the road to deepest night, and the firm soil rent, and him, alas! Oeclides, falling, than whom none was dearer to the prescient stars; and in vain I stretched out my arms and cried aloud. 'Tis a miracle that I tell: only now has my charioteer left the furrowed ground and the smoking, foam-bespattered fields. Nor is the ruin shared by all: the earth knows its own children, the Theban host remains."

[150] Adrastus, horror-struck, is slow to believe, but Mopsus and affrighted Actor were bringing the same tidings. Already rumour, bold to ply new terrors, reports that more than one have perished. Unbidden, not awaiting the wonted bugle-call that sounds retreat, the troops take to headlong flight; but their movement is sluggish, their knees fail their eager haste; the horn-footed steeds themselves – one would think they knew – resist them, and stubbornly defy every

command, whether to hasten pace or lift their eyes from earth. More valiantly the Tyrians press on, but dark Vesper is already leading forth the horses of the moon; a scant truce brings the warriors sad repose, and night that will but increase their fears.

[162] How looks it now, think you, when groans are granted their fill? How fell the tears from the loosened helms? Nought customary delights the weary warriors; they cast down their dripping shields, just as they were, none wiped his spear, or praised his charger, or dressed and decked the plume of his polished helm; scarce do they care to wash their grievous wounds, and stitch up the wide-gaping blows: so great the despair of every heart. Nor could the fear of battle persuade them to take food and due sustenance for war: all sing of thy praises, Amphiaraus, and of thy mind, unfailing oracle of truth; one speech is heard throughout the tents: that the gods have left them, and their protection is departed from the camp. “Where, alas! the laurelled chariot and the sacred arms and fillet-bearing crest? Is this the faith of Castalian lake and grotto, and holy tripod? Is this Apollo’s gratitude? Who now shall explain to me the falling stars, or the purpose of the lightning on the left, or the will divine that leaps in the new-slain entrails? or when to march or tarry, what hour is profitable for battle, or rather calls for peace? Who now shall lay bare all the future, or with whom shall birds hold converse of my destiny? The chances of this war thou knewest also, both for thyself and us, and yet – how great the courage in that inspired breast! – thou camest and didst join our ill-fated arms. And when the earth and thy fatal hour called thee, thou hadst time to lay low the Tyrian lines and hostile standards; then even in the midst of death we saw thee a terror to the foe, and thy spear still threatening as thou didst depart. And now what fate befalls thee? Wilt thou be able to return from the abodes of Styx, and break forth from the depths of earth? Or sittest thou beside the glad Parcae, thine own deities, and by harmonious interchange dost learn and teach the future? Or hath the lord of Avernus in pity granted thee to watch Elysian birds in the groves of the blest?

[195] “Whatever thou art, an eternal grief to Phoebus shalt thou be, and a loss that is ever new, and long shalt thou be mourned by a Delphi that is dumb. This day shall silence Tenedos and Chryse, and

Delos, made fast for the bringing-forth, and unshorn Branchus' shrine, nor on this day shall any suppliant draw nigh to the Clarian temple-gates, nor to the threshold of Dindymus, nor consult the Lycian god. Nay, the precinct also of the horned prophet and the panting oak of Molossian Jove and Trojan Thymbra shall be mute. The very streams and laurels shall of their own will fail and wither, the air itself shall utter no certain presage in prophetic cries, and no wing of bird shall beat the clouds. And soon shall come the day, when thou too shalt be worshipped by truth-inspiring shrines, and thy own priest impart thy oracles."

[208] Such solemn chant do they make in honour of the prophet-prince, as though they were paying the due of flame and gifts and mournful service to the pyre, and laying the soul to rest in the soft earth. Then broken were the spirits of all, with loathing for the war: even so when sudden death snatched Tiphys from the brave Minyae, no longer seems the tackling to obey, no longer the oars to endure the water, and even the breezes drew the vessel with less power. And now were they wearied of weeping, and having mourned their fill in converse, their hearts were lightened little by little, till sorrow was drowned in the approach of night and sleep that gently steals o'er tearful eyes.

[218] But elsewhere, throughout the Sidonian city, far different was that night; in various sport before their houses and within they spend the hours of darkness, and even the sentinels on the walls are tipsy; cymbals and the Idaean drums resound, and the pipe that makes its music by varied breathing. Then in honour of their darling gods and every native deity in order sacred paeans everywhere swell high, everywhere are garlands seen and wreathed bowls of wine. Now mock they the witless augur's death, and again they vie in praising their own Tiresias; now they tell the history of their sires, and sing from its beginnings the ancient tale of Thebes: some tell of the Sidonian sea and the hands that grasped the Thunderer's horns and the mighty bull that ploughed the deep, others of Cadmus and the weary heifer and the fields pregnant with bloody war, others again of the boulders that moved to the music of the Tyrian lute and Amphion stirring rocks to life; these celebrate the travail of Semele, those the Cytherean nuptials and the train of brothers' torches that led

Harmonia to her home; every table has its story. 'Tis as though Liber of late had ravaged Hydaspes rich in gems and the kingdoms of the East, and were displaying to the folk the banners of his swarthy captive-train and Indians yet unknown.

[240] Then for the first time Oedipus, who ever lurked unseen in his dread abode, came forth, they say, to the friendly gatherings of the social banquet, and, serene in countenance, freed his grey hairs from their black filth and his face from unkempt straying locks, and enjoyed the kindly converse of his fellows and the solace denied before, nay, partook of the feast and wiped the undried blood from his eyes. To all he listens and to all he makes reply, who was wont but to assail with sad complain Dis and the Furies and his guide Antigone. They know not the cause. 'Tis not the prosperous issue of the Tyrian war, but war alone delights him; he encourages and approves his son, yet would not have him win; but he searches for the first clash of swords and the seeds of guilt with prayers unspoken. Thence his pleasure in the feast and the strange joy upon his face. Even so old Phineus, after the long fast that was his punishment, when he knew the birds were driven away nor screamed any more about his house – yet believed he not wholly, – recline hilarious at the board, and handle the cups that no fierce wings upset.

[259] The rest of the Grecian host lay fordome with care and battle; from a high mound in the camp Adrastus – frail now and old, but forced by the curse of power to be watchful against disaster – heard with sinking heart the shouts of the merrymakers. From all sides the clamour of bronze and Theban uproar gall him, and the pipe grates harshly on his ears, he is vexed by the insolent shouts of the drunken and the flickering torches and the fires already scarce lasting out the night. So when upon the waves a ship is whelmed in the silence of universal sleep, and the crew in careless trust commend their lives to the peace of ocean, alone upon the poop stands the vigilant helmsman and the god who sails in the bark that bears his name.

[271] It was the time when Phoebus' fiery sister, hearing the sound of his yoked steeds and the roar of Ocean's cavernous abode beneath the gathering dawn, collects her straying beams and with light flick of whip chases the stars away: the king calls the doleful council, and in dismay they ask who shall take up the duty of the tripod, to whom

shall pass the prescient laurel and the widowed glory of the fillet. Straightway all demand holy Melampus' son. Thiodamas of high renown, with whom alone Amphiaraus' self was wont to share the mysteries of the gods and view the flying birds, nor grudged him so much skill, but rejoiced to hear him called his like and nearest rival. Overwhelmed by the high honour and confounded by the unlooked-for glory he humbly reverences the proffered leaves, and pleads that he is unequal to the task, and must needs for his merit be constrained: even as when perchance a young Achaemenian prince has succeeded to the throne and all his father's realms (though safer were it for him that his sire still lived), his delight he balances with uncertain fear, whether his chiefs be loyal, whether the folk will fight against he reins, to whom he shall entrust the frontier of Euphrates or the Caspian gate; then does he feel awe to wield the bow and to mount his sire's own steed, nor can he see himself upholding the sceptre with large grasp nor as yet filling the diadem.

[294] He therefore having set upon his locks the emblem of the twisted wool and held intercourse with the gods, proceeds in triumph through the camp amid shouts of joy, and, first evidence of his priestly office, prepares to appease the Earth: nor seemed it vain to the sorrowing Danaans. Therefore he straightway bids altars twain he wreathed with living trees and well-grown turf, and on them, in honour of the goddess, he flings, countless flowers, her own bounty, and heaps of fruit and the new produce of the tireless year, and pouring untouched milk upon the altars he thus begins: "O eternal Creatress of gods and men, who bringest into being rivers and forests and seeds of life throughout the world, the handiwork of Prometheus and the stones of Pyrrha, thou who first didst give nourishment and varied food to famished men, who dost encompass and bear up the sea; in thy power is the gentle race of cattle and the anger of wild beasts and the repose of birds; round thee, firm, steadfast strength of the unfailing universe, as thou hangest in the empty air the rapid frame of heaven and either chariot doth wheel, O middle of the world, unshared by the mighty brethren! Therefore art thou bountiful to many races, so many lofty cities and peoples, while from above and from beneath thou art all-sufficient, and with no effort carriest thyself star-bearing Atlas who staggers under the weight of the

celestial realm; us alone, O goddess, dost thou refuse to bear? Doth our weight vex thee? What crime, I pray, do we unwittingly atone? That we come hither, a stranger folk, from Inachian shores? All soil is human birthright, nor doth it beseem thee, worthiest one, to distinguish by a test so cruel and so mean peoples who are everywhere and in every land thine own: abide thou common to all alike, and bear alike the arms of all; grant us, I pray, in war's due course to breathe out our warrior souls and restore them to the sky. Whelm not in burial so sudden our still-breathing bodies; haste not, for we shall come by the path all tread, by the permitted way; hearken but to our prayer, and keep firm for the Pelasgians the fickle plain, and forestall not the swift Fates. But thou, dear to the gods, whom no violence nor Sidonian sword did slay, but mighty Nature opened her bosom to enfold in union with herself, as though for thy merits she were entombing thee in Cirrha's chasm, gladly vouchsafe, I pray, that I may learn thy supplications, conciliate me to the gods and the prophetic altars, and teach me what thou didst design to tell the peoples; I will perform thy rites of divination, and in Phoebus' absence be the prophet of thy godhead and call upon thy name. That place whither thou speedest is mightier, I ween, than any Delos or Cirrha, and more august than any shrine." Having thus spoken he casts into the ground black sheep and dark-hued herds, and piles up heaps of billowy sand on their living bodies, duly paying to the seer the emblems of death.

[342] Such things were happening among the Greeks, when already yonder the Martial horns were heard, and the blare of bronze drew fierce swords from their sheaths. From Teumesus' height Tisiphone sends her shrill cry, and shakes her locks, and with their hissing adds a sharpness to the trumpets' note; drunken Cithaeron and the towers that followed a far different music listen in amaze to the unwonted din. Already Bellona is beating at the trembling gates and the armed portals, already by many a doorway Thebes is emptying fast. Horsemen set infantry in disarray, chariots delay the hurrying troops, as though the Danaans urged their rear: thus at the issues of all the seven gates the crowded columns are stuck fast. Creon goes out by lot from the Ogygigan, the Neistae send forth Eteocles, Haemon guards the lofty Homoloian, the Proetian and Electran pour forth the

men of Hypseus and tall Dryas, the troops of Eurymedon make the Hypsistae shake, great-hearted Menoeceus crowds the Dircean battlements. Even so, when Nile in his secret region has drunk with mighty mouth the nurture of a distant sky and the cold snows of the East, he breaks up all his wealth of waters and carried his tempests to the sea in seven wide channels o'er the fields; the routed Nereids take refuge in the depths, and fear to meet the saltless main.

[363] But sad and slow move yonder the Inachian warriors, especially cohorts of Elis and Lacedaemon, and thy of Pylos; robbed of their augur they follow the late-appointed Thiodamas, not yet assenting to his command. Nor is it only thy own ranks that miss thee, lord of the tripods: all the host feels its loss: less gloriously along the line rises that seventh crest. 'Tis as though a jealous cloud were to snatch from the clear sky one of the Parrhasian cluster – spoiled is the glory of the Wain, the axle wavers, shorn of one fire, and the seamen count their stars in doubt.

[373] But already battle calls me: from a fresh source, Calliope, supply new vigour, and may a mightier Apollo attune my lyre! The day of doom brings nigh to the peoples the fatal hour of their own asking, and Death let loose from Stygian darkness exults in the air of heaven, and hovers in flight over the field of battle, and with black jaws gaping wide invites the heroes; nought vulgar doth he choose, but with bloody nail marks as victims those most worthy of life, in the prime of years or valour; and now all the Sisters' strands are broken for the wretched men, and the Furies have snatched the threads from the Fates. In the midst of the plain stands the War-god with spear yet dry, and turns his shield now against these, now against those stirring up the fray and blotting out home and wife and child. Love of country is driven out, and love of the light, that lingers latest in the heart; rage holds their hands all ready on the sword-hilt and on the lance, the panting spirit strives beyond its corslet, and the helmets tremble beneath the quivering plumes. What wonder that the heroes are hot for battle? Horn-footed steeds are inflamed against the foe and bedew the crumbling earth with a snow-white shower, as though they were made one in body with their masters, and had put on the riders' rage: so champ they the bits, and neigh to join the fight, and rearing toss the horsemen backward.

[395] And now they charge, and the first dust-clouds of the heroes begin to meet in the onset; both sides dash forward an equal space, and see the intervening plain diminish. Then shield thrusts against shield, boss upon boss, threatening sword on sword, foot against foot and lance on lance: in such close struggle they meet; together their groans reek, close-packed crests gleam over helmets not their own. The face of battle is still fair: plumes stand erect, horsemen bestride their steeds, no chariot is without its chief; weapons are in their place, shields glitter, quivers and belts are comely, and gold as yet unsightly with blood. But when fury and valour prodigal of life give rein to passion, Arctos lashes not airy Rhodope so fiercely with hardened snow when the Kids are falling, nor does Ausonia hear so loud an uproar when Jupiter thunders from end to end of heaven, nor are the Syrtes beaten with such hail, when dark Boreas hurls Italian tempests upon Libya. Their darts shut out the day, a steely cloud hangs athwart the sky, and the crowded air has no room for all the javelins. Some perish by flung spears, others by spears returning, stakes meet in the void and robe each other of the wounds they carry, spears meet, and dread arrows winged with a double death rival the lightning-stroke. No place for weapons earthward, every dart falls on a body; often they slay and are slain unwitting. Chance does the work of valour: now the press retires and now advances, loses ground in turn and wins it. Even so when threatening Jove has loosed the reins of winds and tempests, and sends alternate hurricanes to afflict the world, opposing forces meet in heaven, now Auster's storms prevail, now Aquilo's, till in the conflict of the winds one conquers, be it Auster's overwhelming rains, or Aquilo's clear air.

[428] At the outset of the fight Asopian Hypseus repulsed the Oebalian squadrons – for these in fierce pride of race were thrusting their stout bucklers through the Euboean lines – and slew Menalcas the leader of the phalanx. He, a true-souled Spartan, child of the mountain-torrent, shamed not his ancestry, but pulled back through bones and bowels the spear that would pass beyond his breast, lest his back should show dishonour, and with failing hand hurled it back all bloody at the foe; his loved Taygetus swims before his dying eyes, and his combats, and the strong breast his mother praised. Dircaean Amyntas marks out Phaedimus, son of Iasus, with his bow:

ah! the swift Fates! already Phaedimus lies gasping on the field, and not yet the bow of sure Amyntas ceased to twang. Calydonian Agreus cut the right arm of Phegeus from off its shoulder: on the ground it holds the sword in unyielding grip and shakes it: Acoetes advancing feared it as it lay amid the scattered weapons, and struck at it, severed though it was. Stern Acamas pierced Iphis, fierce Hypseus Argus, Pheres laid Abas low, and groaning from their different wounds they lay, horseman Iphis, foot-soldier Argus, chariot-drive Abas. Inachian twins had smitten with the sword twin brothers of Cadmus' blood, hidden by their helmets – war's cruel ignorance! – but stripping the dead of all their spoils they saw the horror of their deed, and each in dismay looked on his brother, and cried that they were both at fault. Ion worshipper at Pisa overthrew Daphneus worshipper at Cirrha, in the confusion of his steeds: this one Jupiter praises from on high, that on Apollo vainly pities, too late to aid.

[456] Fortune on either side of the bloody fray sheds lustre on mighty warriors: Cadmean Haemon slays and routs the Danaans, Tydeus madly pursues the ranks of Tyre; the one has Pallas' present aid, the other the Tirynthian inspires: just as when two torrents break forth from mountain heights and fall upon the plain in twofold ruin, one would think they strove, which could overwhelm crops and trees or bury their bridges in a deeper flood; lo! at last one vale receives and mingles their waters, but proudly each would fain go by himself, and they refuse to flow down to ocean with united streams.

[466] Idas of Onchestus strode through the midst shaking a smoky brand, and disarrayed the Grecian ranks, forcing his way with fire; but a great lunge of savage Tydeus' spear from nigh at hand smote through his helm and pierced him: in huge length he falls upon his back, the lance stays upright in his forehead, the flaming torch sinks upon his temples. Tydeus pursues him with a taunt: "Call not Argos cruel; burn, Theban, in thy own flames; see, we grant thee a pyre!" Then like a tigress exulting in her first blood and eager to go through all the herd, he slays Aon with a stone, Pholus and Chromis with the sword, with thrust of lance two Helicaons, whom Maera, priestess of Aegaeon Venus, bore against the goddess' pleasure: victims are ye of bloodstained Tydeus, but even now your mother visits the pitiless

altars.

[480] No less on the other side is Haemon, ward of Hercules, led on by restless vigour; with unsated sword he speeds through thousands, now laying low the pride of Calydon, now Pylene's grim array, now sad Pleuron's sons, until with wearied sear he happens on Olenian Butes. Him he attacks, as he turns toward his men and forbids them to retreat; a lad was he, with cheeks yet smooth and hair unshorn, and the Theban battle-axe aimed against his helmet takes him unaware; his temples are cleft asunder, and his locks divided fall upon his shoulders, and he, not fearing such a fate, passed from life unwitting on its threshold. Then he slays fair-haired Hypanis and Polites – this one was keeping his beard for Phoebus, that one his hair for Iacchus; but cruel was either god – and joins Hyperenor to his victims, and Damasus who turned to flee; but the hero's lance sped through his shoulders and passed out by his heart, and tearing his buckler from his grasp, carried it on the lance-point as it flew.

[497] Even yet would Ismenian Haemon be laying low his Inachian adversaries – for Amphityron's son directs his darts and gives him strength – but against him Pallas urged fierce Tydeus. And now they met in rivalry of favour, and first the Tirynthian thus calmly spoke: “Good sister, what chance has thus brought about our meeting in the fog of war? Has royal Juno devised this evil? Sooner may she see me – unutterable thought! – assault the thunderbolt and make war against the mighty Sire! This man's race – but I disown him, since thou dost aid his foes, ay, were it even Hyllus or Amphitryon sent back from the world of Styx that the spear of thy Tydeus sought in close combat; I remember, and shall remember everlasting, how much that godlike hand, how oft that aegis of thine hath laboured for me, while, a thrall to hardship, I roamed through every land; yea! thou wouldst have gone thyself to pathless Tartarus with me, did not Acheron exclude the gods. Thou gavest me my home, ay, heaven – who could name a service so great? All Thebes is thine, if thou hast a mind to destroy it. I yield and crave pardon.” So he spake, and departed. Pallas is soothed by the praise; her countenance is calm again, the anger spent, and the snakes erect upon her bosom sank to rest.

[519] Cadmean Haemon felt that the god had left him; more weakly

he hurls his darts, nor recognizes his skill in any stroke. Then more and more his powers and courage fail him, nor is he ashamed to retreat; as he gives ground the Acheloian hero assails him, and poising a spear that he alone could wield aims the blow where the rim of the helmet rests on the topmost margin of the shield and the vulnerable throat gleams white. Nor erred his hand, and the spear had found a deadly spot, but Tritonia forbade, and suffered it to touch the left shoulder, sparing her brother for his merits' sake. But the warrior dares no longer hold his ground or engage or bear the sight of murderous Tydeus; his courage grows faint, and his confidence has departed: as when the bristly visage of a boar has been grazed by a Lucanian javelin-point, and the blow has not sunk deep into his brain nor has the aim been true, he lets the anger of his side-stroke weaken, nor attacks the spear he knows too well.

[536] Lo! now, indignant that Prothous the leader of a squadron is hurling sure darts with happy aim against the foe, Oenides furiously strikes two bodies with one shaft of pine, horseman and horn-footed steed: Prothous falls and the horse upon him, and as he gropes for the lost reins the horse tramples the helm upon his face and the shield upon his breast, until as the last drops ebb from his wound he casts off the bridle and sinks with his head upon his master's body. Even so from Mount Gauranus fall an elm-tree and a vine together, a twofold loss to the husbandman, but the elm more sorrowful seeks also for its comrade tree, and falling grieves less for its own boughs than for the familiar grapes it crushes against its will. Corymbus of Helicon had taken arms against the Danaans, formerly the Muses' friend, to whom Uranie herself, knowing full well his Stygian destiny, had long foretold his death by the position of the stars. Yet seeks he battles and warriors, perchance to find theme for song; now lies he low, worthy himself to be sung with lasting praise, but the Sisters wept his loss in silence.

[554] Atys, betrothed from childhood to Ismene, offspring of Agenor, went his way, a youth no stranger to the wars of Thebes, though Cirrha was his home, nor had he shunned his bride's kinsmen for their evil deeds; nay, her misery undeserved and chaste humility commend her to her lover's favour. He too was noble, nor was the maiden's heart turned from him, and they were pleasing in each

other's sight, had only Fortune suffered it. But war forbids his marriage, and hence the youth's fiercer wrath against the foe; among the foremost he rushes on, and now afoot with errant sword, now grasping the reins aloft, as though at some spectacle, he drives before him the ranks of Lerna. With threefold robe of purple had his mother clothed his yet growing shoulders and smooth breast, and now, lest he should go in meaner raiment than his spouse, she had plated with gold his harness and with gold his arrows and his belt and armlets, and had encrusted his helm with inlay of gold. Trusting alas! in such things as these he challenges the Greeks to combat, and first assailing a weak company with his spear he brings back spoil of arms to his comrades, and the slaughter accomplished returns to the friendly lines. So a Caspian lion beneath Hyrcanian shade, still smooth nor terrible yet in the yellow glory of his mane, and guiltless of great carnage, raids the slow-moving flock not far from their fold while the shepherd is away, and sates his hunger on a tender lamb. Soon he feared not to attack Tydeus, knowing not his prowess but judging only by his stature, and dared to vex him with his frail weapon, as of the shouted taunts at some and pursued others. At length the Aetolian turned his gaze by chance upon his feeble efforts, and with a terrible laugh: "Long since," he cries, "I have seen, insatiate one, 'tis a famous death that thou desirest!" and forthwith, deeming the bold youth worthy of neither sword nor spear, with careless fingers lightly flung an unwarlike shaft; yet the missile drained deep the recesses of the groin, as though hurled with all his might. His death assured, Oenides passes him by, and is too proud to plunder. "For not such spoils as these," says he, "will I hang up to Mars, or to thee, warlike Pallas; shame keep me far from taking them for my own pleasure; scarcely had Deipyle left her bower and come with me to war, would I have borne her spoils that might mock at."

[592] So saying, he is led on to dream of nobler prizes of the fight: as when a lion by chance hath slaughter innumerable in his power, he passes by the unwarlike calves and heifers: he is mad to drench himself in some mighty victim's blood, nor to crouch save on the neck of a chieftain bull. But Menoeceus fails not to hear the dying wail of fallen Atys: thither he turns his horses, and leaps down from his swift chariot; the Tegean warriors were drawing night him where

he lay, nor did the Tyrians hold them off. “For shame, Cadmean youth,” he cries, “that belie your earthborn sires! Whither fly ye, degenerate ones? Hath he not fallen more nobly for our folk, the stranger Atys? Ay, still but a stranger, nor yet, hapless one, hath he avenged his spouse; shall we betray a pledge so great?” Heartened by righteous shame they rally, and each bethinks himself of those he loves.

[607] Meanwhile in the seclusion of their chamber the sisters – innocent pair, guiltless offspring of unhappy Oedipus – mingle their converse with varying complaint. Now grieve they for their present ills, but starting from the far origins of their fate, one laments their mother’s marriage, the other their father’s eyes, this one the brother that reigns, that one him that is an exile, and both lament the war. Long do they hesitate in their unhappy prayers: fear sways them either way, in doubt whom they wish defeated in the fight, and whom victorious: but in their silent hearts the exile wins the day. So when Pandion’s birds seek once more trusty welcome and the homes they left when winter drove them forth, and they stand over the nest and tell to the house the old story of their woe, a broken, dolorous sound goes forth: they deem it words, nor in truth does their voice sound other than words. Then after tears and a long silence Ismene begins again: “What delusion is this of mortals? What means this trust deceived? Is it true then that our cares are awake in time of rest, and our fancies return in sleep so clearly? Lo! I, who could not bear the thought of wedlock, not even in sure abiding peace, this very night, my sister – ah! for shame! – I beheld myself a bride; whence did my fevered slumber bring my husband before my vision, whom I scarce know by sight? Once in this palace I caught sight of him, my sister, not of my own will – while pledges in some wise were exchanged for my betrothal. One the instant all was confusion to my view and sudden fire fell between us, and his mother followed me, demanding Atys back with loud clamour. What presage of disaster to whom I know not is this? And yet I have no fear, so but our home be safe and the Dorian host depart, and we can reconcile our haughty brothers.”

[636] Such was their converse, when the quiet house started at a sudden tumult, and Atys, rescued at great labour’s cost, bloodless but still living, is borne in; his hand is on his hurt, outside the shield the

neck droops languid, and the tresses hang backward from his forehead. Jocasta saw him first and trembling called his beloved Ismene; for that prayer alone do the dying accents of her son-in-law utter, that name alone hovers on his parched mouth. The women shriek, and the maiden lifts her hands to her face; fierce shame restrains her, yet she must needs go to him, Jocasta grants the dying man this final boon, and shows her and sets her before him. Four times at the very point of death he bravely raised his eyes and failing vision of her name; at her alone, neglecting the light of heaven, he gazes, and cannot gaze enough on the face he loves. Then because his mother is not near and his father is laid in blissful death, they give to his betrothed the sad office of closing his eyes; there at last unwitnessed and alone, she gave utterance to wifely grief and drowned her eyes in tears.

[655] While these things were happening in Thebes, Enyo, afire with torch fresh-charged and other serpents, was restoring the fight. They yearn for battle, as though they had but lately borne the opening shock of combat hand to hand, and every sword still shone bright and clear. Oenides is pre-eminent; though Parthenophaeus draw an unerring shaft, and Hippomedon trample the faces of the dying with furious steed, though the spear of Capaneus fly even from far with a message to Aonian troops, that day was the day of Tydeus: from him they flee and tremble, as he cries out: "Whither turn ye your backs? Lo! thus can ye avenge your slain comrades, and atone for that sad night. I am he who took fifty lives in unsated carnage; bring as many, ay, as many squadrons in swarms! Are there no fathers, no loving brothers of the fallen? Why such forgetfulness of sorrow? Shame on me that I departed content to Inachian Mycenae! Are these all that stand for Thebes? Are these your monarch's strength? And where can I find that noble chieftain?" Therewith he spies him on the left of the array, encouraging his columns and conspicuous by the flash of haughty helm; not less swiftly does he rush to meet him all afire, than the bird that wields the flame swoops on the frightened snow-white swan and enfolds him in his mighty shadow. Then he first speaks: "Most righteous king of the Aonian people, meet we in open fight, and show we our swords at last, or doth it please thee to await the night and thy wonted darkness?"

Nought spake he in reply, but the whizzing cornel-shaft comes flying against his foe, bearing the chieftain's message; the prudent hero strikes it aside just as it reached its mark, and himself eagerly hurled a mighty weapon with strength unknown before: on was the angry lance flying, to end the war. On it the gods, Sidonian and Greek, who favoured either side, turned their eyes; cruel Erinys checks the course, and preserves Eteocles for a brother's impious deed; the erring spear-point lighted on Phlegyas the charioteer.

[688] Then a great fight arose of heroes, for the Aetolian, drawing his sword, charged more fiercely, while Theban warriors protected the retreating king. So in the murk of night a crowd of shepherds forces away a wolf from the bullock he has seized; but he relentlessly rises up against them, nor cares to attack those who bar his way; him, him only, whom he had once assailed, does he pursue. Just so does Tydeus ignore the lines arrayed against him and the lesser throng, and pass them by in the fight; yet he wounds the face of Thoas, the breast of Deilochus, Clonius in the flank, stern Hippotades in the groin; now he throws back their limbs to mutilated trunks, or whirls heads and helms together through the air. And now he had enclosed himself with the spoils and corpses of the fallen; the ring of foes spends itself on him alone, at him alone all darts aspire; some lodge within his limbs, some fall amiss, others Tritonia tears away, many stand stiffly in his shield. Thick-planted already with spears, his buckler is a quivering grove of steel, and his native boarskin is torn upon his back and shoulders; gone is the towering glory of the crest, and the Mars that held the peak of his grim helmet falls, a happy omen to its lord. The bare bronze is fixed and welded in his temples, stones strike his head and fall rattling about his armour. His helm now fills with blood, and now his wounded breast is drenched by a dark mingling torrent of blood and sweat. He looks round upon his applauding comrades and on faithful Pallas, who conceals from afar her face behind her shield; for she was on her way to soften with her tears her mighty sire.

[716] Lo! an ashen spear charged with mighty wrath and fate cleaves the zephyrs, its author unperceived: Melanippus it was, the son of Astacus, and he betrayed not his own work and would fain have been hidden, but the joy of his troop revealed him all affrighted;

for Tydeus bending o'er his groin had sunk upon his side and let go his round shield. Aonians and Pelasgians mingle their shouts and groans, and form a barrier, and protect the indignant hero. He spying afar through the foe the hated Astacides, summons for a stroke all the vital forces that remain, and hurls a dart that Hoplesus who stood by had given him; the effort makes the blood spout and flow. Then his grieving comrades drag him away, eager yet to fight – what fiery zeal! – and calling for spears, and even in death's agony refusing to die, and set him on the farthest margin of the field, propped against shields on either side, and promise with tears a return to the conflicts of fierce Mars. But he too now felt the light of heaven fail him and his mighty spirit yield to the final chill, and lying on the ground he cries: "Have pity, sons of Inachus: I pray not that my bones be taken to Argos or my Aetolian home; I care not for funeral obsequies; I hate my limbs and my body so frail and useless, deserter of the soul within it. Thy head, thy head, O Melanippus, could one but bring me that! for thou art grovelling on the plain, so indeed I trust, nor did my valour fail me at the last. Go, Hippomedon, I beg, if thou has aught of Atreus' blood, go thou, Arcadian, youth renowned in thy first wars, and thou, O Capaneus, mightiest now of the Argive host!"

[745] All were moved, but Capaneus first darts away, and finding the son of Astacus lifts him still breathing from the dust, and returns with him on his left shoulder, staining his back with blood from the stricken wound: in such wise did the Tirynthian return from the Arcadian lair, when he brought home to applauding Argos the captive boar.

[751] Tydeus raises himself and turns his gaze upon him, then mad with joy and anger, when he saw them drag the gasping visage, and saw his handiwork therein, he bids them cut off and hand to him his foe's fierce head, and seizing it in his left hand he gazes at it, and glows to see it still warm in life and the wrathful eyes still flickering ere they closed. Content was the wretched man, but avenging Tisiphone demands yet more. And now, her sire appeased, had Tritonia come, and was bringing immortal lustre to the unhappy hero: when lo! she sees him befouled with the shattered brains' corruption and his jaws polluted with living blood – nor can his comrades wrest it from him –; fierce stood the Gorgon with

outstretched snakes, and the horned serpents upreared before her face
o'ershadowed the goddess; with averted face she flees from him
where he lies, nor enters heaven ere that the mystic lamp and Elisos
with plenteous water has purged her vision.

BOOK 9

[1] The news of the mad fury of blood-stained Tydeus exasperates the Aonians; even the Inachidae themselves grieve but little for the fallen warrior, and blame him, complaining that he has transgressed the lawful bounds of hatred; nay, thou too, O Gradivus, most violent of gods, though at that time the furious work of slaughter did most occupy thee, thou too wert offended, as they relate, by such hardihood, nor turned they own gaze thereon, but drove another way thy affrighted steeds. Therefore the Cadmean youth rise up to avenge the shameful profanation of Melanippus' corpse, as much inflamed as though their father's bones had been disturbed from their sepulchres and their urns flung a prey to cruel monsters. The king himself infuriates them still further: "Who any more is merciful or humane to the Pelasgians? Why, with hooked fangs they rend our limbs – shame on such madness! Have we then so glutted their weapons? – Do ye not think ye are making war on Hyrcanian tigers or facing angry Libyan lions? And now he lies – O! noble solace of death! – his jaws fastened in his enemy's head, and meets his unhallowed end in welcome gore. Our weapons are ruthless steel and brands of fire, but theirs is naked hate, and savagery that needs no arms. May they continue in their frenzy and enjoy a renown so glorious, do thou but look upon it, O Father supreme! But they complained that the battle-field gaped and they marvel that the earth fled: would even their own soil bear such as them?" So speaking, he led his men forward in a fierce onset shouting loud, and all alike furious to seize the corpse of hated Tydeus and to gain his spoils. Not otherwise do swarms of obscene birds veil the stars, when the breezes have told them afar of tainted air and bodies left unburied; thither in clamorous greed they haste, the lofty sky is loud with flapping of wings, and lesser fowl withdraw from heaven.

[32] Fame, travelling in swift rumours about the Aonian plain, is spread from troop to troop, a more rapid messenger than of wont when her tidings are evil, until she glides into the affrighted ears of Polynices, to whom her tale brings most grievous news of loss. The youth stiffened with horror, his ready tears stood congealed, and slow

was he to give credence; for Oenides' well-known valour now prompts and now forbids him to believe his death. But when the disaster was confirmed on undoubted warrant, his mind and vision are whelmed in night; his blood stands still; together his arms, together his limbs sink down, his lofty helm is already moist with tears, and his greaves caught the shield as it fell. Sadly he goes, dragging faint knees and trailing spear, as though burdened by a thousand wounds and maimed in every limb; his comrades shrink from him and point to him with groans. At length he throws away the armour he scarce has power to carry, and falling naked on the now lifeless body of his peerless friend speaks thus with streaming tears:

[49] "Oenides, last hope of my emprise, is this my gratitude, is this my due reward and recompense to thee, that thou shouldst lie bare on Cadmus' hated earth and I be unharmed? Now for ever am I an exile and for ever banished, since my other, ay and truer, brother has, alas, been taken from me. No more do I seek the old decrees of lot or the perjured diadem of a guilty throne: to what purpose are joys so dearly bought, or a sceptre that thy hand will not place in mine? Depart from me, ye warriors, and leave me to face my cruel kinsman alone: nought avails it to try further battle and be wasteful of deaths. Depart, I pray you; what greater thing can ye give me now? I have squandered Tydeus. By what death can I atone for that? O father of my bride! O Argos! and that first night's honest quarrel, and our mutual blows, and the short wrath that was the pledge of long affection! Ah! why was I not then slain by thy sword, great Tydeus – thou wert able – on the threshold of our host Adrastus? Nay more, on my account thou didst go to Thebes, and willingly enter my brother's impious palace, whence none other would have returned, as though to win a sceptre and honours for thyself alone. Already of devoted Telamon, already of Theseus fame ceased to tell – and lo! in what plight thou liest here! Which wounds shall I first marvel at? Which is they blood, which thy foe's? What troops, what countless bands o'erthrew thee? Nay, the Father himself, and I mistake not, envied thee, and Mars smote thee with all the force of his spear."

[73] So he speaks and weeping cleanses with his tears the hero's face that still runs blood, and composes it with his own hand. "Didst thou then hate my foes thus far, and do I outlive thee?" – in his blind

passion he had pulled the sword from its sheath, and was pointing it for death – his friends restrained him, and his father-in-law rebukes him, and calling to his mind the chances of war and the will of fate consoles his swelling heart, and from that dear body, whence comes his grief and eager will for death, little by little he drags him far away, and mid his converse silently puts back the weapon. He is led like a bull that having lost the partner of his toils deserts in numb despair the furrow he has begun among all the acres round, and on his drooping neck drags part of the unsightly yoke, while part the weeping ploughman bears.

[86] But see! rallying to the battle-cry of Eteocles a chosen band of warriors advances, who neither Tritonia would have despised in the fray nor Mavors in the encounter with the lance: against them, when he had set his protecting shield before his breast and thrust forth his long spear tall Hippomedon stands his ground: even as a rock that fronts the waves, and hath no fear from heaven, and the waters are broken and give way before it: firm it stands, unmoved by threats; the very sea flees from its stark face, and from afar the troubled barks recognize it. Then first the Aonian – choosing withal a stalwart spear: “Hast thou no shame in the presence of the gods and with heaven as witness to guard this ghost, this corpse that defames our warfare? Surely ’tis a glorious task and a memorable exploit to compass burial for this wild beast, in fear he go not to Argos to win his meed of tears and obsequies, nor on the soft bier spew out his cursed gore! Dismiss your care; him no birds nor foul monsters will devour, not even the sacred fire itself, were we to grant it.”

[103] No more he spake, but hurled a huge javelin, that, checked by the hard bronze, yet passing through, is stayed in the second layer of the shield. Then Pheres aims, and vigorous Lycus; but the dart of Pheres falls vainly to earth, while Lycus cleaves the casque with its terrible streaming plume; torn by the lance-point the crest is scattered far, and lays bare the inglorious helm. He himself neither retires, nor leaps out to attack the foeman, but ever turning in his own ground to every side now advances and now draws back, nor ever for long gives his right arm play, but in all his movements keeps nigh the body, keeps the body in view, hovering over and around it. Not so jealously does its mother shield and protect a helpless calf, her first-

born, when a wolf is threatening, and wheel round in perplexity with lowered horns; for herself she has no fear, but forgetful of her weaker sex foams at the mouth, and, female as she is, imitates mighty bulls. At last the cloud of darts grew less, and they could hurl weapons back again; and by now Alcon of Sicyon had come in succour, and the Pisaeon squadron of fleet Idas arrives, and they reinforce the phalanx. Rejoicing thereat he flings a Lernaean shaft against the foe: it flies with all an arrow's speed, and tarrying not a whit pierces Polites through the middle, and still persistent passes through the shield of Mopsus his close comrade. Then he transfixes Cydon the Phocian, and Phalanthus of Tanagra, and Eryx, the latter as he turns rearward in search of weapons, with no thought of death, through the long tresses of his head; the other expiring marvels that he has received the lance not in his face but in his hollow throat, and therewith the blood gushes forth, full of his dying wail, and the teeth that the spear-point has dislodged. Leonteus, lurking behind the battle of the heroes, stealthily dared to put forth his right hand, and pulled at the prostrate corpse, seizing its hair: Hippomedon spied him, though faced by many a threat on every side, and with his grim blade lopped off the impudent hand, taunting him withal: "'Tis Tydeus, Tydeus himself who robs thee of it! Have fear of heroes even when they are slain and touch not, miserable man, the mighty dead!" Thrice did the Cadmean phalanx pull away the dreadful corpse, thrice do the Danaans drag it back again: just as an anxious vessel strays in a lawless tumult of the Sicilian sea, despite the helmsman's fruitless efforts, and then returns on her path with canvas backward-blown.

[144] No Sidonian forces would there have availed to drive Hippomedon from his purpose, no engine-hurled missiles were like to move his stout resistance, and the blows that proud battlements dreaded had fallen baffled from the buckler they assailed. But, mindful of the Elysian monarch, and recounting the crimes of Tydeus, impious Tisiphone craftily draws nigh to the middle of the field: the armies felt her presence, and horses and men alike were seized by a sudden sweat, although, laying aside her own aspect, she counterfeited Halys the Inachian; absent was the unhallowed torch and the scourge, while her locks at her command held their peace. As

warrior, and with flattering looks and voice, she comes near to fierce Hippomedon, yet he feared her countenance as she spoke, and marvelled at his fear. Weeping she says: "In vain, O man of renown, thou guardest thy dead comrades and the unburied bodies of the Greeks – is that then our fear, do we yet care for a sepulchre? – Lo! Adrastus is being dragged along, the captive of a Tyrian band, and to thee before all else, to thee he cries and beckons. Alas! in what plight I saw him slip and fall in blood, his diadem torn and the white locks streaming free! Nor far from here, look! where all that cloud of dust is, all that mass of men."

[164] Awhile the hero stood perplexed, balancing his fears; the ruthless maid urges him: "Why dost thou hesitate? Shall we go forward? Or does this dead body keep us back, and is he more worthless who survives?" To his comrades he entrusts the forlorn task and the fight that should be his, and strides away, deserting his loyal friend, yet looking behind him, and ready, should they perchance recall him. Then following the impetuous footsteps of the relentless goddess he rushes here and there in aimless, pathless course, till the wicked Fury, casting her shield behind her, vanishes darkly from his sight, and snakes innumerable break forth from her helmet. The cloud disperses, and the unhappy man beholds the Inachidae unperturbed, and Adrastus in his chariot, fearing nought.

[177] And now the Tyrians possess the body, and by loud cries attest their joy; the triumphant shout steals upon the ear and strikes the heart with secret dismay. He is dragged on hostile soil – alas! fate's cruel power! – that very Tydeus for whom of late a mighty space on either hand was left as he pursued the ranks of Thebes, whether on foot or shaking out his chariot-reins; never still are hands or weapons or any savagery of man: they delight to wound with impunity those features rigid in death and that visage that they feared. This is their passion, by this deed they strive, both brave and cowards, to gain ennoblement, and they keep the blood-stained weapons to display to their young children and their wives. So when weary troops of shepherds have warred down a lion that has long devastated Moorish fields, and caused flocks to be penned up and guardians to be watchful, the countryside exults, the husbandmen come with loud cries of joy, and pluck at the mane and open the

mighty jaws and tell of all their losses, whether he now keeps vigil nailed up beneath the roof, or hangs the glory of some ancient grove.

[196] But fierce Hippomedon, although he sees now his help is of no avail and he is too late to fight for the stolen corpse, nevertheless goes on and blindly whirls his relentless sword, scarce knowing friend from foe, so that nought delay his advance; but the ground now slippery with recent slaughter, and arms and dying men and shattered chariots impede him, and his left thigh, which the spear-point of the Echionian monarch pierced, but in his fury he had dissembled the wound or known not of it. At length he sees Hopleus sorrowing: he, the trustly comrade of great Tydeus and lately, but all in vain, his squire, was holding the wing-footed steed, who, with bowed neck and ignorant of his master's fate, was impatient only of his idleness, and because his lord was more adventurous in the fray of infantry. Him, though he scorns a new weight on his proud back – for since his taming he knew but one hand only – the hero seizes and thus bespeaks: “Why refuseth thou thy new destiny, unhappy charger? Never more for thee is the burden of thy haughty lord; nor more shalt thou sate thy hunger on the Aetolian meads, or shake free thy exultant mane about the streams of Achelous. This remains for thee – go and at least avenge thy dear master's death, or come with me, lest thou too in captivity vex his vanished shade, and after Tydeus bear some boastful rider.” One would have said he heard and was enkindled: so violently does he whirl him away in wild career, resenting the less the similar reins. Even so the half-brute Centaur leaps down into the vale from the airy height of Ossa: at himself the lofty forests quake in fear, at the horse the plain shakes. Alarmed and breathless the sons of Labdacus flock together, on them Hippomedon bears down, and shearing with the sword their unwitting necks leaves behind their falling trunks.

[225] They had reached the river: with channel fuller than of wont Ismenos was running then in mighty spate, an omen of disaster. There a short respite was given, thither the columns urged their weary flight in terror from the field; the waves, their refuge from the fray, are spellbound at the warriors, and are lit up by the bright sheen of armour. Into the water they leapt, and with a great crash the bank gave way and the opposite shores lay hid in dust. He too with

mightier leap plunges through the hostile stream against the astonished foe, just as he was – no time for dismounting –, only his javelins, fixed in the green turf, he entrusts for a while to a poplar tree. Then, indeed in deadly terror, of their own accord they fling their weapons on the waves that carry them away; some doff their helms and lie basely hid, so long as they can maintain their lives beneath the waters; many tried to swim the river, but their fastenings grip them, the belts impede their breathing, and the soaked corslets weigh down their bodies. Even as beneath the swelling flood the dark blue fishes are afraid, whenso'er they see a dolphin probing the secret lairs of the deep; the whole swarm flees to the lowest pools and huddles frightened in the green seaweed: nor come they forth till through the surface waves he darts his curving body and prefers to race the ships that meet his sight: even so he hero drives them pell-mell before him, and in mid-stream both guides the rein and aims the shaft, upheld by his swimming horse, whose nimble hoof, accustomed to the plain, now treads the wave and seeks the deep-sunk sands.

[252] Chromis lays Ion low, Antiphos Chromis, and Hypseus Antiphos, Hypseus also Astyages, and Linus, who is about to leave the river and flee away, were it not that the Fates forbid, and early in his life's thread he is doomed to watery death. Hippomedon presses hard the ranks of Thebes, Asopian Hypseus throws the Danaans into confusion; on either side the river is affrighted, each stains the waters thick with blood, from that stream each is fated never to return. And now mangled limbs are rolled down on the flowing current, and heads and severed arms rejoin their bodies, and now the wave bears lances and light targes and slackened bows, and plumes suffer not their casques to sink. Far and wide the surface of the stream is strewn with floating weapons, and its depths with men; there bodies wrestle with death, and the confronting stream chokes back their forth-issuing breath.

[266] The lad Argipus had grasped a river-side elm-tree in the rushing flood; savage Menoeceus with his sword shears through those comely shoulders; he, as he falls, still striving, gazes, a trunk, at his own arms on the high boughs. The spear of Hypseus sank Tages with a mighty wound: he remains at the bottom, and in place

of his body his blood returns. To rescue his brother Agenor leapt down from the bank, and grasped him – alas! poor wretch! – but the wounded man weighs him down in his embrace, as he tries to lift him. Agenor could have freed himself and come forth from the water, but liked not to return without his brother. Capetus rises to his right and threatens a blow, but is sucked down by the entangling eddies of the rapid current; now his face goes under, now his hair, now his right arm is gone, last of all his sword sinks beneath the headlong waters. One death in a thousand shapes of dying torments the wretches. A Mycaesian spear-point sheathes itself in Agyrtes' back: he looks round, but there was none who hurled it; urged by the torrent's flow the spear had sped and found his blood.

[284] The Aetolian charger too is pierced in his strong shoulders, and at the deadly shock rears up and prances, beating the air: yet he chief is no white upset by the plunge, but pities the horse, and groaning pulls the dart from the deep wound with his own hand, and of his own accord lets go the reins. Then he rejoins the fray afoot, surer both in step and hand, and, one after the other, slays tardy Nomius and valiant Mimas and Lichas of Thebes and Lycetus of Anthedon and Thespiades, one of twin brothers; to Panemus begging a like fate he cries: "Live on, and to the walls of accursed Thebes depart alone, no more to deceive thy unhappy parents. Thanks be to Heaven that Bellona's gory hand has driven the fight in to the rapid stream; the wave sweeps away the cowards on their native flood, and the naked ghost of unburied Tydeus shall not moan and shriek around your pyres; ye shall go down to feed the cruel monsters of the deep, but him the earth doth carry and shall resolve into her own elements." So harries he the foe, and with taunts adds bitterness to his blows; and now he rages with the sword, now snatches up floating javelins and flings them back; Theron he slays, the friend of chaste Diana, and Gyas, dweller in the country, and wave-wandering Erginus, and unshorn Herses, and Cretheus, contemner of the deep, who oft in a tiny craft had weathered Caphareus' stormy promontory and the Euboean squalls. Behold the power of fate! a lance pierces his breast, and he is carried on the stream, alas on what waters shipwrecked! Thee too Pharsalus, crossing the river in thy lofty care to join thy companions, the Doric spear-point overturns the slays

they horses: the violence of the angry flood engulfs them, and the ill-starred union of the yoke.

[315] Come now, ye learned Sisters, grant me to know what toil laid low Hippomedon in the heaving billows, and why Ismenos himself was roused to join the fray; for your task it is to search out the past, and let not fame grow old. Crenaeus, the youthful son of Faunus and the nymph Ismenis, rejoiced to fight in his mother's waters – Crenaeus, who first saw the light in the trusted stream and was cradled in the green banks of his native river. So thinking that there the Elysian Sisters had no power, merrily, now from this bank now from that, he crosses his caressing grandsire: the wave supports his footsteps, whether he go downstream or athwart the flood; nor when he goes counter does the river one whit delay him, but flows backward likewise. No more winningly does the sea cover the waist of the stranger from Anthedon, nor Triton rise higher from the summer waves, nor yet Palaemon, when he hastes back to his darling mother's kisses, and smites his tardy dolphin. Gay harness decks his shoulders, and his splendid buckler gleaming with gold is engraved with the ancient tale of the Aonian race. Here the Sidonian maid rides on the white back of the enticing steer; now fears she not the sea, now clings not to the horns with tender hands; around the margin of her feet the waves play sportively; one would think that he bull moved upon the shield, and cleft the billows. The river-waves, of the same colour as the sea, assist belief. Then bold alike with weapons and saucy speech he challenges Hippomedon: "This is no poisonous Lerna, no Herculean Hydras drink these waters, 'tis a sacred river that thou art defiling, ay, sacred, - so shalt thou find it to thy cost, thou wretch! – and gods have been nourished by its streams." Nought said the other, but advanced upon him; in a denser mass the flood resisted him, and checked his hand, but yet he drave home the wound for all his hindering, and pierced utterly life's secret chambers. The river shuddered at the horrid deed, ye woods on either shore lamented, and deeper groans resounded from the hollow banks. From his dying lips came the last cry: "Mother!" As he uttered it, the waters choked the poor lad's voice.

[351] But his mother, amid her company of silvery-gleaming sisters, leapt up straightway from the sea-green valley at the shock of

doom, frenzied, with loosened hair, and in wild grief rent with many a blow her face and bosom and green robe. Forth from the waves she burst, and with trembling voice again and again cries out “Crenaeus”: nowhere was he to be seen, but on the flood there floats his shield, a mark, alas! his unhappy parent must recognize too well; he himself lies far off, where on the bounds of mingling sea and river Ismenos suffers his last charge. Often thus does Alcyone deserted make lament for her wave-wandering, spray-drenched home, when savage Auster and envious Thetis have scattered her darlings and their shivering nests. Once more the bereaved mother sinks, and hidden in the watery depths she searches in vain for her dead son by many a track, where the path shines clear before her as she goes – searches and yet bewails; oftimes the bristling river checks her, and a bloody haze obscures her vision. Yet in mad haste she flings herself on weapons and swords, and thrusts her hand into helmets and turns over prostrate corpses; nor drawing nigh the deep did she enter the bitter brine of Doris, until a band of Nereids pitying her wafted his body, now in the keeping of the ocean-billows, to his mother’s breast. Embracing him on the sloping bank and with soft tresses dries his wet face and cries amid loud lament:

[376] “Is this the gift thy half-divine parents and thy immortal grandsire have given thee? Is it thus thou reignest in our flood? Unhappy boy! gentler was the discordant alien earth, gentler the ocean wave, which brought back thy body to the river and seemed to await thy hapless mother’s coming. Are these my lineaments? Are these the eyes of thy fierce sire? Are these thy billowy grandsire’s tresses? Once wert thou the pride and glory of wave and woodland, and while thou livedst I was held a greater goddess and the queen of Nymphs. Where alas! is that late crowd of courtiers round thy mother’s halls, where are the Maidens of the Glen (Napaeae) that prayed to serve thee? Why do I now bring thee home, Crenaeus, in my sad embrace, not for myself but for thy burial, who hadst better remained there in the cruel deep? Hard-hearted father, hast thou not pity nor shame for such a death? What lake profound and inescapable hath engulfed thee in the river’s depths, so that nor thy grandson’s cruel fate nor my own weeping can reach thee there? Lo! Hippomedon rages and boasts himself the master in thy flood, and

banks and waves tremble before him; his was the stroke that made the water drink our blood; but thou art sluggish, and the fierce Pelasgians' acquiescent slave! Come at least, cruel sire, to the ashes and last obsequies of thy own, for 'tis not thy grandson only whose pyre thou shalt kindle here." With her words she mingles wailing, and stains with blood her innocent bosom, while the caerulean sisters re-echo her lament; so, men say, did Leucothea, not yet a Nereid, wail in Isthmus' haven, when her cold babe with gasping breast spewed out upon his mother the angry sea.

[404] But father Ismenos, reclining in that secret cavern whence winds and clouds do drink and the rain-bringing bow is nourished, and whence comes a fuller harvest to the Tyrian fields, when from afar, spite of his own waters' roar, he caught the sound of lamentations and his daughter's earliest groans, uplifted his moss-grown neck and his ice-weighted hair; the tall pine fell from his loosened grasp, and the urn dropped and rolled away. Along the banks the woods and lesser rivers marvel at him as he thrusts forth his face encrusted with age-long mire; so majestically he rises from the flood, lifting his foamy head and his breast astream with echoing fall of rivulets from his dark-blue beard. One of the Nymphs meets her father and tells him of his daughter's tears and his grandson's fate, and shows him the blood-stained author of the deed and seizes his right hand; high he stands in the deep river, and smiting his face and horns entwined with green sedge, thus begins sore troubled with deep-mouthed utterance: "Is this thy reward, O ruler of the gods above, for that so oft I played the accomplice-friend to thy adventures, and saw – I fear not to recall it – the shameless horns on thy false visage, then Phoebe forbidden to unyoke her care, or the dowry-gift of a funeral-pyre and the lightning's trickery? And hat I have nurtured the foremost of thy sons? Do they too feel so mean a gratitude? Of a truth the Tirynthian crawled an infant by this river; with these waters I quenched thy Bromios as he burned. See the carnage the corpses a I carry on my stream, choked utterly with weapons as it is and hidden beneath unwonted heaps. Continuous warfare besets my channel, every wave breathes horror, and souls new-slain wander above me and beneath, and join bank to bank in darkness. Yet I, that river invoked with holy cries, I, whose praise it

is to lave in my pure fount the soft wands and horns of Bacchus, am blocked with dead, and seek a difficult passage to the sea; so great a stream of gore fills not the impious meres of Strymon, and foaming Hebrus reddens not so deeply when Gradivus is at war. Does not thy fostering wave rebuke thee and thy violence, O Liber, who hast long forgotten thy parents? Is Eastern Hydaspes more easily subdued? But thou who boastfully exuldest in the spoils and slaughter of an innocent lad, thou shalt not return in triumph from this stream to mighty Inachus of fierce Mycenae, unless it be that I am mortal and thou of heavenly race.”

[446] So spake he, gnashing his teeth, and gave the sign to his already raging waters: cold Cithaeron sends succour from the hills, and bids his ancient snows and stores of frost be moving; to the flood his brother Asopos unites his secret stores, and supplies streams from wide-open veins. He himself explores the hollow earth’s recesses, and tries torpid lakes and pools and lazy fens, and lifting skyward his greedy countenance sucks down the moisture of the clouds and drains dry the air. Already he flowed with a tide that rose above either lofty bank, already Hippomedon, who of late stood higher than mid-channel’s depth, with unmoistened arms and shoulders, is marvelling that the stream has grown above his stature. All round him the billows swell and the angry tempest rises high, like the sea when it drains the Pleiads or flings darkened Orion against trembling mariners. Not otherwise does the Teumesian river batter Hippomedon with its seething flood and ever is hurled back by the shield on his left arm, and anon the dark tide in its foaming onslaught surges over his buckler, pours back with shattered wave and returns in greater volume; moreover, not content with the watery mass, its plucks at the trees that support the crumbling banks and whirls along aged boughs and stones torn from its bed. River and hero are locked in unequal combat, and furious grows the god; for the other retreats not, nor is weakened by any threats, but advancing attacks the oncoming billows, and holding out his shield divides the stream. His feet stand firm though the ground recedes, and with straining sinews he holds fast to slippery rocks, and by struggling and clinging with his knees he maintains the foothold that the treacherous mud undermines, and thus he taunts besides: “Whence, Ismenos, this

sudden wrath? Or from what deeps hast thou drawn these forces, slave of an unwarlike god, who knowest nought of blood save in women's revels, when the Bacchic pipe is bleating, and frenzied matrons defile the three-yearly festival?" He spoke, and on the instant the god assailed him, his visage a welter of rain and clouded by floating sand; nor was he fierce in speech, but with an oak-trunk thrice and four times smote his adversary's breast with all the might of a god's wrath, rising to the blow; he at last turned his steps, the buckler stricken from his arm, and beat a slow retreat. The waters press after him, and the river follows in triumph as he gives ground; the Tyrians too vex him from above with stones and iron hail, and drive him back from either bank. What can he do, beset by flood and battle? No flight is there now for the unhappy man, no room for a glorious death.

[492] Rising from the grassy brim there stood an ash-tree, on the doubtful verge of land and waters but more friendly to the waters, and held the stream in the dominion of its mighty shadow. The succour of this tree – for where could he attempt the land? – he grasped with clutching fingers, nor did it endure the strain, but, overcome by a weight too great for its hold, gave way, and, torn from the roots whereby it entered the river and gripped the thirsty ground, dropped from on high and hurled itself and the bank together on the dismayed hero, nor brooking him further, bridged and damned the stream with sudden downfall. Hither all the waves comes surging, and an inescapable whirlpool of mud and hollow eddies rises and falls. And now the tortuous flood surrounds the shoulders, now the neck of the warrior; compelled at last to confess despair he exclaims: "For shame! great Mars! wilt thou drown this life of mine in a river? Must I then sink beneath sluggish lakes and meres like a shepherd caught in the cruel waters of a sudden torrent? Have I verily not deserved to fall by the sword?" Moved by his prayers Juno at length accosts the Thunderer: "How long, glorious sire of gods, how long wilt thou press the hapless sons of Inachus? Already Pallas holds Tydeus in detestation, already Delphi is silent, its prophet slain; lo! my Hippomedon, whose home is Argos and Mycenae the cradle of his race, who worships Juno before all other gods – is it thus I am faithful to my own? – shall my Hippomedon go to feed the cruel

monsters of the deep? Surely thou didst once allow the conquered to have the last rites of the tomb? Where are the flames that followed the Cecropian fray? Where is Theseus' fire?" He spurns not his consort's righteous plea, but lightly glanced towards Cadmus' walls: the waters beheld his nod and sank to rest. The shoulders and breast of the hero are revealed, those drained of blood, that pierced with wounds: as when a stormy sea, made mountainous by the winds, abates, the rocks and the land the sailors sought for rise into view, and the waters subside from the threatening crags.

[526] What avails it to have gained the bank? The Phoenician host presses him on every side with a storm of darts, his limbs are without covering, all exposed is he to death; then his wounds stream, and the blood that was staunched beneath the waters flows in the open air and breaks the tender apertures of the veins, and the cold of the river makes him reel and stagger in his gait. He falls, even as on Getic Haemus, whether from Boreas' rage or its own strength's decay, an oak that blended its foliage with the sky falls forward and leaves a void in the wide air; as it totters, the forest and the very mountain tremble, for fear where it may fall, what stretch of woodland it may shatter. Yet none dares touch his sword or helmet; scarce believe they their eyes, but shudder at the monstrous corpse, and approach it with drawn swords.

[540] At length Hypseus went near and wrenched the sword-hilt from his deathly grip, and freed the grim visage of its casque: then he goes through the Aonian ranks, displaying the helmet balanced aloft on his glittering blade, and crying exultantly: "Behold the fierce Hippomedon, behold the dread avenger of impious Tydeus, and the subduer of the gory flood!" Great-hearted Capaneus knew him from afar, and mastered his rage, and poising a huge javelin with his arm thus prays: "Help me now, right arm of mine, my only present aid in battle and deity irresistible! On thee I call, thee only I adore, despising the gods above." So he speaks, and himself fulfils his own prayer, The quivering fir-shaft flies through shield and corslet's brazen mail, and finds out at last he life deep in the mighty breast; he falls with the thunderous crash of a lofty tower when pierced and shaken with innumerable blows it sinks in ruin, and opens the breached city to the conquerors. Then standing over him: "We deny

thee not," says he, "thy death's renown; look hither, 'twas I that dealt the wound. Depart in joy, and boast thee far beyond the other shades!" Then he seizes the sword and casque of Hypseus, and tears away the shield; and holding them over the dead Hippomedon: "Receive, O mighty chief," he cries, "thy own and thy enemy's spoils together; thy ashes shall have their glory and thy shade its rightful rank. Meanwhile, till we pay thee the flame that is thy due, Capaneus thy avenger hides thy limbs in this sepulchre." Thus impartial Mars in the cruel vicissitudes of war gave interchange of mutual slaughter to Greeks and Sidonians alike: here they mourn fierce Hippomedon, there Hypseus, no slower to the fray, and each gain solace from their foes' distress.

[570] Meanwhile the stern-eyed mother of the Tegean archer-lad, troubled in her sleep by gloomy dreams, with flying hair and feet duly unsandalled was going before day-break to Ladon's chilly stream, that she might cleanse her tainted slumbers in its living waters. For throughout many a distracted, care-worn night she would often see spoils that she herself had dedicated fallen from the shrines, and herself, a fugitive from the woodlands and chased away by Dryad folk, wandering by unknown tombs, and often new-won triumphs of her son brought home from the war, his armour, his well-known steed, his comrades, but himself never; or again she would see her quiver fallen from her shoulders, and her own images and familiar likenesses aflame. But that night seemed to the unhappy woman to portend surpassing terrors, and disturbed all her mother's heart. Well-known throughout the forests of Arcadia was an oak of fertile growth, which she herself had chosen from a multitude of groves and made sacred to Diana, and by her worship endued with power divine; here she would lay by her bow and weary shafts, and fasten the curved weapons of boars and the flayed skins of lions, and antlers huge as woodland boughs. Scarce have the branches room, so closely set is it with spoils of the country-side, and the sheen of steel mingles with the green shade. This oak-tree, when once she was returning from the uplands tired with long chase, and carrying in proud triumph the head late-severed of an Erymanthian bear, she beheld all hacked and torn with many a wound, its foliage fallen, and its branches dripping blood and dying on the ground; in answer to

her question a Nymph told of the violence of cruel Maenads and her foe Lyaeus. While she moaned and beat her breast with imaginary blows, her eyes cast off their darkness; from her sorrowing couch she leaps, and searches o'er her cheeks for the phantom tears.

[602] So when by dipping thrice her hair in the river she had atoned the sacrilege, and added words that comfort a mother's troubled heart, she hastened to armed Diana's shrine while the morning dew was falling, and rejoiced to see the familiar woodland and the oak-tree all unharmed. Then standing at the threshold of the goddess she prays thus, to no avail: "Maiden Queen of the forests, whose ungentle standards and ruthless warfare I follow, scorning my sex, in no Grecian manner – nor are the barbarous-fashioned Colchians or troops of Amazons more truly thy votaries – if I have never joined revelling bands or the wanton nightly sport, if, although stained by a hated union, I have nevertheless handled not the smooth wands nor the soft skeins, but even after wedlock remained in the rough wilds, a huntress still and in my heart a virgin; if I took no thought to hide my fault in some secret cave, but showed my child and confessed and laid him trembling at thy feet – no puny weakling was he, but straightway crawled to my bow, and as a babe he cried for arrows in his first tearful accents: for him I pray – ah! what mean these nights of terror, these threatening dreams? – for him, who now in confident hope, trusting overmuch, alas, in thee, is gone to battle; grant me to see him victorious in the war, or if I ask too much, grant me but to see him! Here let him labour and bear thy arms. Make the dire signs of ill to cease; what power, O Diana of the woods, have Maenads and Theban deities in our glades? Woe is me! – why in my own heart do I find a dreadful omen in the oak? But if sleep sends true presagings to my unhappy mind, I beseech thee, merciful Dictynna, by thy mother's travail and thy brother's splendour, pierce with all thine arrows this unblest womb! Let him first hear of his wretched mother's death!" She spoke, and beheld even cold Diana's marble moist with falling tears.

[637] The stern goddess leaves her still stretched upon the sacred doorway and brushing the cold altar with her tresses, and with a bound crosses the leafy summit of Maenalos in mid-air and directs her steps to Cadmus' walls, where the inner path of heaven shines for

gods alone, and high uplifted views all the earth together. And now, near half-way on her road, she was passing the forest-clad ridges of Parnassus, when in a glittering cloud she saw her brother not as she was wont to see him: for he was returning sadly from the Echionian fray, mourning the death of the engulfed augur. The region of the sky glowed red as their rays mingled; at the divine conjunction the beams of each shone out, their bows met, and quiver rang to quiver. He first began: "I know, my sister, 'tis the Labdaccian ranks thou seekest, and the Arcadian who dares to fight too valiant for him. His faithful mother begs thee: would that the Fates might grant her prayer! Lo! I myself have availed not – ah! for shame! – but seen my votary's arms and consecrated laurels go down to the void of Tartarus, and his face turned toward me as he went, nor did I check his car or close the chasm of the earth, heartless that I am and unworthy to be worshipped. Thou seest how my caverns mourn, O sister, and the silence of my shrine; this is my sole recompense to my loyal friend. Nor do thou continue to summon aid that can but fail, nor pursue thy sad task in vain; the youth is near his end, 'tis fate immutable, nor do thy brother's oracles deceive thee on a doubtful matter." "But I may surely obtain glory for him at the last," the maiden in dismay replies, "and find a colace for his death, if indeed it so must be, nor shall that man escape unpunished, whoever shall impiously stain his guilty hand with the blood of an innocent boy, and may my shafts wreak dire revenge!" With these words she moved upon her way, and suffering her brother but a scant embrace sought Thebes in hostile mood.

[670] But on either side after the slaying of the chiefs the fight waxed fiercer, and the lust of vengeance aroused mutual rage. Here the squadrons of Hypseus shout and the troop that has lost its leader, there with deeper roar the bereft cohort of the dead Hippomedon; fiercely struggling they expose their bodies to the sword, and with equal ardour drain the foe's blood and shed their own, nor do they budge a step: the lines stand locked, column against column, and they yield their lives, but will not turn their backs, to the cruel foe – when gliding through the air the swift Latonian takes her stand on the Dircaean height; the hills know her, and the forest trembles at the well-known goddess, where once bare-breasted with cruel arrows she

had slain Niobe and all her brood, out-wearying her bow.

[683] But the land, exultant now that the slaughter has begun, was darting between the lines on a hunter steed, untrained to war and suffering then his earliest bridle; about him was cast a striped tiger-skin, and the gilded talons beat upon his shoulders: his knotted mane in controlled luxuriance lies close against his neck, and upon his breast tosses a crescent chain of snow-white tusks, tokens of the woodland. The boy wore a cloak twice steeped in Oebalian dye, and a glittering gold-embroidered tunic – only this had his mother woven – gathered about his waist by a slender girdle, and, burdened by a huge sword, he had let drop his shield on the left shoulder of his horse; the golden buckle of the belt that hangs by his armed side delights him with its polished clasp, and he joys to hear the rattle of the scabbard and the chains that fall behind him from his crest; sometimes he gaily tosses his flowing plume and his glancing jewel-studded casque. But when his panting helm grows hot in the fight, he frees him of the covering and appears bare-headed; then sweetly shine his locks and his countenance, all a-quiver in the sunbeams, and the cheeks whose tardiness he himself laments, not yet changed by rosy down. Nor does he find pleasure in the praise of his own fairness, but puts on a harsh severity of look; yet anger becomes him and preserves the beauty of his brow. Freely do the Theban warriors yield him place, remembering their own sons, and relax their straining bows, but he pursues and plies them with ruthless javelins, for all their pity. Even the Sidonian Nymphs along Teumesian ridges praise him as he fights; his very dust and sweat are in favour, and sighing they breathe unspoken prayers.

[712] Tender sorrow steals to the depth of Diana's heart as she beholds this sight, and staining her cheeks with tears she cries: "What escape from approaching death can thy faithful goddess find thee now? Was it to battles such as these thou hastenedst, fierce, ill-fated lad? Alas! thy rash and untried spirit drove thee, and the love of fame that prompts to a glorious death. Too scant already, forsooth, was the Maenalian forest for thy impetuous years, and the paths that lay through lairs of beasts, scarce safe for thee, child, without thy mother, to whose bow and woodland spears, impudent boy, thy strength was yet unequal. And she now is making loud and bitter

complaint about my altars, and wearies the unhearing doors and thresholds; in the well-loved clarions and the battle's outcry thou art rejoicing, happy thou, and thou shalt die making but thy mother wretched." Yet lest as he dies she fail to bring him her last honour, she advances into the midst of the array, hemmed about with dusky mist, and first stealing the light shafts from the back of the bold lad, she fill his quiver with celestial arrows, whereof none falls unstained with blood; then she sprinkles his limbs with ambrosial liquor, and his steed also, lest their bodies be profaned by any wound before his death, and murmurs many a sacred charm and conscious spell, which she herself teaches the Colchian maids at night in secret caves, and as they search shows them cruel herbs.

[736] Then indeed uncovering his bow he darts in fiery course about the field, nor is controlled by caution, forgetful of his native land, his mother and himself, and uses overmuch his heavenly weapons: just as a lion, whose Gaetulian dam brings him herself in his infancy gory food, as soon as he feels his neck swell with muscles and grimly looks at his new talons, scorns to be fed, and at last breaks forth to freedom and loves the open plains, and can no more return to his cave. Whom now slayest thou, ruthless boy, with thy Parrhasian horn? Coroebus of Tanagra, did thy first shaft lay low, sped on a narrow path between the lowest margin of the helm and the uppermost of the shield; the blood wells up into his throat, and his face glows red with the sacred fiery venom. More cruelly Eurytion falls, in the orb of whose left eye the cunning point buries itself with triple barb. Pulling out the arrow that brings the melting eyeball with it, he dashes at his assailant; but what cannot the brave weapons of the gods perform? A second wound in the other orb makes his darkness complete; yet he yields not but pursues the foe by memory's aid, until he trips and falls o'er prostrate Idas: there wretchedly he lies gasping amid the victims of the cruel fight, and entreats friend and foe to slay him. To these he adds the sons of Abas, Argus of the noble locks, and Cydon, guiltily loved by his unhappy sister. Him did he pierce through both his temples with transverse-flying shaft: from one temple the point protrudes, at the other the feathers' flight was stayed, from both the blood came flowing. None do his angry darts excuse from death, Lamus is not

shielded by his beauty, nor Lygdus by his fillet, nor Aeolus by his budding manhood. Lamus is pierced in the face, Lygdus bewails a wounded groin, thou, Aeolus, dost bemoan the dart that transfixed thy snow-white brow. Thee rocky Euboea bore, thee Thisbe shining white had sent, this warrior, green Erythrae, thou wilt not receive again. No blow but tells, no missile flies unfavoured of heaven, his right hand rests not, and the next arrow's twang follows hard upon the last. Who could believe that one bow, one arm was dealing death? Now aims he forward, now shifts from side to side in bewildering change of attack, now flees when they assail and turns nought but his bow to face them.

[776] And now in wonder and indignation the sons of Labdacus were rallying, and first Amphion, of Jove's famous seed, ignorant still what deaths the lad was dealing on the battle-field: "How long shalt thou still make profit of death's delaying, thou boy that shalt be a sore loss to thy goodly parents? Nay, even yet thy spirit swells high and thy rashness grows, while none deigns to meet thy onset and thy too feeble might, and thou art left as beneath their wrath. Go, return to thy Arcadia and mingling with thy equals there, while fierce Mars exhausts his fury here in the real dust of war, play thy soldier games at home! But if the melancholy glory of the tomb doth more thee, we will grant thee to die a hero's death." Long had the truculent son of Atalanta raged with yet bitterer taunts against him, and ere yet the other had ended thus begins: "Nay, I am even late in making war on Thebes, if this is all your host! What boy so tender as to refuse to fight with such as these? No Theban offspring seest thou here, but the warlike stock of the Arcadian race; no Thyiad mother, slave to Echionian Lyaeus, bore me in the silence of night, never have we put unsightly turbans on our heads, nor brandished dishonourable spears. From childhood I learnt to crawl on frozen streams, and to enter the dread lairs of monsters, and – but why should I say more? My mother has ever the sword and bow, your fathers beat hollow drums!" Amphion brooked this not, but hurled a mighty spear at his face while he spoke; but his charger, affrighted by the terrible gleam of the steel, swung round with his master to one side, and swerving sent the greedy javelin flying wide of the mark. Amphion was attacking the youth with drawn sword the more fiercely, when the

Latonian leapt down into mid-plain, and stood clear to see before the eyes of all.

[808] Dorceus of Maenalus, bound by the ties of chaste affection, was keeping close to the lad's side: to him the queen had entrusted her son's rash youth and her own fears and all the chances of war. Disguised in his features the goddess then addressed the boy: "Enough, Parthenopaeus, to have routed the Ogygian bands so far; enough, now spare thy unhappy mother, spare the gods who favour thee." But he unterrified: "Suffer me, faithless Dorceus – no more will I ask – to slay this man who bears weapons that rival mine, and boasts like apparel and resounding reins. These reins I will handle, the apparel shall hang on Trivia's lofty door, and his captured quiver shall be a present to my mother." The Latonian heard him, and smiled amid her tears.

[821] Long time from a distant quarter of the sky had Venus, in the embrace of Mars, beheld her, and while she anxiously commended Thebes and Cadmus and her dear Harmonia's progeny to her lord, she stirred with timely utterance the grief that lay hidden in his silent breast: "Seest thou not, O Gradivus, yonder wanton maid who goes to and fro among the troops of warriors? And with what boldness she is ordering the lines and the Martial standards? Lo! she even presents and offers to the slaughter all these men of our own race! Hath she then valour? Hath she the rage of battle? Nought then remains for thee but to hunt the woodland deer!" Moved by these just complaints the lord of war sprang down into the fight: as he sped through the paths of air Anger alone was his companion: the other Madnesses were busy in the sweat of war. Without delay he stands by Lato's sorrowing daughter and chides her with harsh reproof: "Not such battles as these does the Father of the gods allow thee: leave forthwith the field of arms, thou shameless one, or thou shalt learn that not even Pallas is a match for this right hand." What can she do against him? On one side the spear of Mavors threatens her, on the other, child, is thy distaff, full already, yonder the stern countenance of Jove: then she departs, yielding to reverence alone.

[841] But father Mavors looks round upon the Ogygian ranks, and rouses up the terrible Dryas, who had turbulent Orion as the author of his blood, and an inherited hatred of Diana's followers – hence came

his fury. Sword in hand he leaps upon the disheartened Arcadians, and robs their leader of his arms: in long lines fall the folk that dwell in Cyllene and shady Tegea, and the Aepytian chieftains and the Telphusian cohorts. Their prince himself he is confident to slay, though his arm be tired, nor does he husband his strength; for the other, already weary, was wheeling his squadrons here and there: a thousand presentiments of doom crowd on him, and the black clouds of death float before his eyes. And now the wretched lad could see but few companions and the true Dorceus, now he felt his force ebb little by little, and his shoulder lighten as the shafts diminished; already less and less can he support his armour, and even to himself he seems now but a boy, when Dryas blazed terribly before him with fiercely-flashing shield; a sudden tremor shook the countenance and the frame of the Arcadian, and, just as when a white swan sees above him the bearer of the angry thunderbolt he wishes that Strymon's bank would gape and gathers his trembling wings about his breast, so the youth, perceiving the great bulk of savage Dryas, felt wrath no longer, but a thrill that heralded death. Yet he plies his weapons, pale-faced and praying vainly to Trivia and the gods, and makes ready the bow that will not answer. Already he is on the point to shoot, and with both elbows held aslant he is touching the bow with the arrow-head and his breast with the string – when, mightily whirled, the Aonian chieftain's spear flies straight upon him, and cuts the slanted fastenings of the echoing bowstring: the shot is lost, his hands relax, and the arrow falls fruitless from the backward falling bow. Then in confusion and distress he drops both reins and weapons, reckless of the wound that had pierced the harness and the soft skin of his right shoulder; another javelin follows and checks the charger's flight, cutting the tendons of his leg. Then Dryas himself falls – strange! – nor ever knows who wounds him; one day the author of the deed and its cause will be revealed.

[877] But the lad is carried from the field in his comrades' arms – alas, for his tender years! – and dying bewails his fallen steed; relived of the helm his head sinks back, and a sickly charm plays about his quivering eyes; thrice and four times, grasping his hair, they shake the neck that refuses to stay upright, and – a horror whereat Thebes itself might weep – the purple blood came welling

from the snow-white breast. At last he speaks, with sobs that break his utterance: "I am dying, Dorceus: go, solace my poor mother. Already, if care doth bring true presage, she hath seen this calamity in dream or omen. Yet do thou with loyal craft keep her fears in suspense, and long deceive her; nor come upon her of a sudden, nor when she holds a weapon in her hand; and when at last thou art forced to admit the truth, say this to her: Mother, I confess my fault; exact thy unwilling punishment; I rushed to arms, though a mere boy, nor, though thou didst hold me back, would I be still, nor, despite thy trouble, war once begun did I spare thee at the last. Live then thou and be angry rather at my impetuous spirit and now be done with fears. In vain dost thou look forth anxiously from Lycaeus' hill, if perchance sound or dust of my cavalcade rise to thee through the air afar; cold on the bare earth I lie, and thou art nowhere near me, to hold my face and catch my parting breath. Yet take this tress, O mother bereaved," and with his hand he offered it to be cut, "take this tress in place of my whole body; once thou wert wont to trim it in spite of my vain scorn. To it give burial, and amid the rites remember to let none blunt my weapons with inexperienced hands, or lead my beloved hounds to the hunting-grounds any more. But burn these ill-fated arms of my first warfare, or hand them up as a reproach to ungrateful Diana."

BOOK 10

[1] Dewy Night overwhelmed Phoebus in the gateway of the West, hastened by the commands of Jove; nought pities he the Pelasgian camp nor the Tyrian forces, but he grieved that beside the warriors so many innocent folk should fall by the sword. Far stretches the plain, a vast unsightly sea of blood; there they leave their arms, and the steeds whereon before they went so proudly, and the corpses deprived of their pyres and the neglected limbs. Then, an unsightly troop with tattered ensigns, they withdraw their exhausted lines, and the gates that were so narrow as they thronged to battle are all too broad as they return. Each side is alike distressed, but Thebes has solace in the four Danaan bands wandering without a chief: like alder vessels on the billowy deep that are widowed of their helmsmen and steered by God and Chance and all the storms. Therefore the Tyrians are emboldened to keep watch no more on their own camp, but rather on their foes' retreat, lest haply they seek to return with all speed to Mycenae; the watchword gives the signal to the sentinels, and posts are set; Meges by lot, and Lycus at his request are leaders of the night's enterprise.

[19] And now in marshalled ranks they bring arms and food and fire; the king cheers them as they go: "Conquerors of the Danaans – for tomorrow's dawn is near, and the darkness that saved the cowards will not last for ever – raise your spirits high and let your hearts be worthy of heaven's favour. All the glory of Lerna, all her foremost might lies low: Tydeus is gone to avenging Tartarus; Death starts to behold the black augur's sudden shade; Ismenos is swollen with the plunder of Hippomedon's spoils; the Arcadian we are ashamed to count among the trophies of war. Our reward is in our hands, gone are the proud leaders of the host, and the chieftains' crests displayed along the sevenfold array; formidable indeed is Adrastus' dotage, and my brother's more cowardly manhood, and Capaneus' frenzied arms! Forward then, and set your wakeful fires about their beleaguered camp. Ye need not fear the foe; 'tis booty ye watch, and wealth that at last is yours."

[35] Thus does he heap encouraging words upon the fierce

Labdacidae: they rejoice to repeat the toils already endured. Just as they were, with dust and sweat and blood still caked upon their limbs, they turned to go, scarce heeding the farewells that would stay them, but shaking off the embracing arms and hand-clasps of their friends. Then sharing between them front and rear and curving flanks they ring round the rampart with hostile flame. So gathers at nightfall a herd of ravening wolves, whom over all the country-side hunger that brings reckless daring has starved with long privation: already they are near the very sheep-folds, hope unfulfilled and the feeble bleatings and juicy scents from the pens torture their throats; at last they break their claws against the cruel stakes, and bruise their bodies and blunt their unfleshed fangs upon the doors.

[49] But far away a suppliant train of Pelopean dames, prostrate before their native altars and on the threshold of the Argolic fane, implore the help of sceptred Juno and the return of their loved ones, and press their faces to the cold stones and painted doors, and teach their little children to kneel. The day was already spent in entreaties: night comes and adds its cares, and the altars keep vigil with high-piled fires. They bear too a gift in a basket, a robe whose marvellous texture no hand of childless wife nor of any parted from her husband had wrought, a garment full worthy of the chaste goddess: thereon was much purple, gaily embroidered in manifold design and blazing with interwoven gold. She herself was there, promised in marriage to the great Thunderer, but not yet a bride and timidly putting off her sisterhood; with downcast eyes she kisses the youthful Jupiter, a simple maid, nor yet offended by the secret loves of her husband. With this robe the Argive matrons at that time veiled the sacred ivory image, and with tears and supplications made their prayer: "Look upon the sacrilegious towers of the Cadmean harlot, O Queen of the starry pole, shatter that rebel hill, and hurl – for thou canst – another thunderbolt against Thebes." What can she do? She knows the Fates are adverse to her Grecians, and Jove's favour is turned away, but she would that such prayers and gifts were not wasted; nevertheless, a ready chance gave occasion for potent aid. From lofty heaven she sees the city-gates closed and the rampart guarded by sleepless sentinels; the stings of anger thrilled her frame, and stirred her hair and shook the awful diadem: no more fiercely did she rage, when

alone in heaven she felt wrath against Alcmena for her offspring and for the Thunderer's twofold adultery. Therefore she determines to make the Aonians, sunk in the timeless bliss of slumber, a prey to death, and bids her own Iris gird herself with her wonted circles, and commits to her all her task. Obedient to command, the bright goddess leaves the pole and wings her way down her long arc to earth.

[84] Beyond the cloud-wrapt chambers of western gloom and Aethiopia's other realm there stands a motionless grove, impenetrable by any star; beneath it the hollow recesses of a deep and rocky cave run far into a mountain, where the slow hand of Nature has set the halls of lazy Sleep and his untroubled dwelling. The threshold is guarded by shady Quiet and dull Forgetfulness and torpid Sloth with every drowsy countenance. Ease, and Silence with folded wings sit mute in the forecourt and drive the blustering winds from the roof-top, and forbid the branches to sway, and take away their warblings from the birds. No roar of the sea is here, though all the shores be sounding, nor yet of the sky; the very torrent that runs down the deep valley nigh the cave is silent among the rocks and boulders; by its side are sable herds, and sheep reclining one and all upon the ground; the fresh buds wither, and a breath from the earth makes the grasses sink and fail. Within, glowing Mulciber had carved a thousand likenesses of the god: here wreathed Pleasure clings to his side, here Labour drooping to repose bears him company, here he shares a couch with Bacchus, there with Love, the child of Mars. Further within, in the secret places of the palace he lies with Death also, but that dread image is seen by none. These are but pictures: he himself beneath humid caverns rests upon coverlets heaped with slumberous flowers, his garments reek, and the cushions are warm with his sluggish body, and above the bed a dark vapour rises from his breathing mouth. One hand holds up the locks that fall from his left temple, from the other drops his neglected horn. Vague dreams of countless shapes stand round about him, true mixed with false, flattering with sad, the dark brood of Night, and cling to beams and doorposts, or lie on the ground. The light about the chamber is weak and fitful, and languid gleams that woo to earliest slumbers vanish as the lamps flicker and die.

[118] Hither from the blue sky came in balanced flight the varicoloured maid; the forests shine out, and the shady glens smile upon the goddess, and smitten with her zones of radiance the palace stars from its sleep; but he himself, awoken neither by the bright glow nor by the sound or voice of the goddess, lay motionless as ever, till the Thaumantian shot at him all her splendours and sank deep into his drowsy vision. Then thus began to speak the golden fashioner of clouds: "Sleep, gentlest of the gods, Juno bids thee bind fast the Sidonian leaders and the folk of ruthless Cadmus, who now, puffed up by the issue of the fight, are watching in ceaseless vigil the Achaean rampart, and refuse thy sway. Grant so solemn a request – rarely is this opportunity vouchsafed, to win the favour of Jove with Juno on thy side." She spoke, and with her hand beat upon his languid breast, and charged him again and yet again, lest her message be lost. He with his own nodding visage nods assent to the goddess' command; o'erweighted with the caverns' gloom Iris goes forth, and tricks out her beams, made dim by showers of rain.

[137] Himself too he bestirred both swift progress and his wind-torn temples, and filling his mantle's folds with the chill dark air is borne in silent course through heaven, and from afar swoops down in might upon the Aonian fields. The wind of his coming sets birds and beasts and cattle prostrate on the ground, and, whatsoever region of the world he passes in his flight, the waves slide languidly from the rocks, more lazily cling the clouds, the forests bow their summits, and many a star drops from the loosened vault of heaven. The plain first felt the god's presence by the sudden coming of a mist, and the countless voices and cries of men were hushed; but when he brooded with dewy wings and entered the camp, unsubstantial as a pitchy shadow, eyes wavered and heads sank, and words were left unfinished in mid-speech. Next shining bucklers and cruel spears are dropped from their hands, their faces fall in weariness upon their breasts. And now universal silence reigns: even the horn-footed steeds refuse to stand, even the fires are quenched in sudden ashes.

[156] But slumber woos no the anxious Greeks to the same repose, and the night-wandering, persuasive deity keeps his mists from the camp hard by; on every side they stand to arms, in wrath at the hateful gloom and their foes' proud sentinels. Lo! a sudden frenzy,

heaven-inspired, seizes Thiodamas, and in awful tumult bids him show forth the fates, whether Saturnia fired him with this resolve, or kindly Apollo incited his new attendant. He rushes in the midst, fearful to see and to hear, and impatient of the god, whom his frail mind had received but could not contain; his pangs overwhelm him, stark madness reigns upon his visage, and the uncertain blood now distends, now ebbs from his trembling cheeks; his gaze darts here and there, he shakes and scatters on his shoulders the wreaths entwined in his locks. Thus does the Idaean mother summon from the terrible shrine the blood-stained Phrygian and make him unconscious of his knife-hacked arms; he beats the holy pine-brands against his breast, and tosses his gory hair and deadens his wounds by running; all the country-side and the bespattered votary tree feels terror, and the panic-stricken lions rear the chariot high.

[176] Now had he reached the inner council-chamber and the revered home of the standards, where Adrastus, long distressed by the dire disasters, takes fruitless counsel for their desperate plight: the new-appointed chiefs stand about him, each the next successor to the slain, and gaze at the empty places of the mighty princes, feeling no joy but rather grief that they are raised so high. Even so when a bark has lost its helmsman and stopped in mid-voyage, either the watchman of the sides or of the wave-breasting prow succeeds to the guidance of the widowed helm; the ship herself is all aghast, and the very tackling is slow to obey the word, nor does she brook the protection of a lesser lord. Therefore with spirited words the prophet rouses the hearts of the downcast Achaeans: "Chieftains, it is the high commands and awful counsels of the gods that I bring you; these words come not from my own breast; he gives the oracle, whom your solemn word, he too consenting, constrained me to serve and to assume his fillets. The divine augury reveals a night fruitful in achievement and well fitted for glory-winning guile; Valour meets and beckons us, and Fortune implores our arms. The Aonian legions are sunk 'neath the spell of slumber: now is the time to avenge our princes' deaths and that unhappy day; snatch up your weapons and break through the hindering gates! This means the lighting of our comrade's pyres, this means their burial. This saw I during the battle of the day, when our arms were stricken and we fled defeated to the

rear – I sear it by the tripods and the strange fate of my lost master – I saw it, and the birds around me sang a favouring strain. But now my belief is sure. Only now beneath the silent night he himself – himself, Amphiaraus! – rose up again from the chasm of earth, even as he was – the shades had touched his team alone – and came towards me: 'tis of no vain phantom of night, or vision of sleep that I tell. 'Wilt thou allow the idle sons of Inachus,' he cries, '– restore then those Parnassian wreaths, give me back my own gods! – to lose so favourable a night, degenerate one? Was it thus I taught thee all the secrets of the sky and the wandering flight of birds? Begone! for me at least take vengeance with the sword.' He spake, and seemed to raise his lance, and to drive me with all his chariot's force unto these doors. Arouse you, then, and use heaven's favour; this is no hand-to-hand slaying of the foe; his men lie prostrate, and ye may take your revenge. Will any come forward, ready to exalt themselves to mighty fame, while the Fates allow? Lo! once again the birds of night are auspicious; I follow them, and though my comrades' troops lie idle, I go alone! Ay, and there he too comes, shaking his reins!"

[219] With such cries did he disturb the night: the chiefs pour forward, fired as though the same got inspired the hearts of all: they burn to accompany him, and share his fortunes. By command he chooses thirty himself, the flower of all the host; the rest of the youth demand in wrathful clamour, why remain they in the camp ingloriously at ease; some plead their noble birth, some their kinsmen's deeds, others their own, others again shout for the lot, and all take up the cry. Adrastus exults that they oppose him, and his spirits rise. Thus upon Pholoë's height a rearer of swift coursers rejoices when the breeding-time of prolific spring has renewed his stud, and he beholds some straining up steep mountain-paths, some swimming the stream, others vying with their sires; then in idle thought he ponders which he shall tame to bear a gentle yoke, which will make good riders, which are born for trumpets and arms, which best fitted to win the palm of Elis: such was the aged chieftain of the Achaean host. Nor does he fail the enterprise: "Whence of a sudden comes so late the favour of heaven? What gods are ye, who have turned again to Argos in her distress? Is this the valour born of misfortune? Does the vigour of our race still survive, and seeds of

courage endure in spite of adversity? Yea, I praise you, heroic youths, and enjoy my warriors' glorious mutiny; but it is fraud and a hidden assault that we devise, our movements must be concealed; a crowd ill fits a secret ruse. Nurse then your rage, lo! dawn will bring vengeance on our foes; then shall the fight be open, and all take the field!" These words at length restrained and allayed their ardour: even so might father Aeolus, when the cave is in a tumult and the winds are already yearning for the deep, sternly set another rock against the door, and wholly bar their passage.

[249] Beside the rest the seer takes with him Agylleus, son of Hercules, and Actor: persuasive of speech is Actor, the other boasts strength equal to his sire's; with each go ten companions, a troop that even in open fight the Aonians would fear. He himself, since he goes to unwonted battle and ruse of war, lays down the sacred leaves, the emblems of Phoebus, and entrusts the glory of his brow to the bosom of the aged prince, and dons helm and corslet, the welcome gift of Polynides. Fierce Capaneus fastens his heavy sword on Actor, not deigning himself to go by stealth against the foe, or to follow where heaven leads. Agylleus borrows the arms of truculent Nomius; for what would the bow and shafts of Hercules have availed him, battling amid deceiving shades?

[262] Then, lest the brazen hinges groan too loudly, they leap down from the steep battlements of the fortress wall; nor is it long before lo! their prey lies vast upon the ground, as though already lifeless and slain by many a sword. "Forward, friends, withersoe'er delight in carnage unsated takes you, and have strength for the work I pray, since heaven shows us favour!" Now with loud voice the seer exhorts them, "See ye the cohorts lying in base torpor? Shame on them! Dared these beleaguer Argive gates, and keep watch on heroes?" So spake he, and drew his flashing sword, and with swift hand passed over the doomed lines. Who could reckon up the slaughter, or give names to all the crowd of corpses? At random he goes o'er backs and breasts, and leaves behind him groans stifled in their helms, and mingled all his victims in a welter of blood; one stretched carelessly upon a couch, another slipping with reeling steps upon his shield, too late, and fumbling with his arms, others lying in a throng amid wine and weapons, others propped against their shields – each one just as

ill-fated slumber and the night that was their last had bound and cast them to the ground. Nor lack they divine power, but armed Juno frees her right hand and brandishing a lunar torch makes clear their path and strengthens their courage and displays the bodies. Thiodamas feels her presence, but conceals his joy in silence; already his hand grows slow, and his blade weak, and his fury is dimmed by too much success. Not otherwise does a Caspian tigress, amid a mighty slaughter of bullocks, when fury appeased by streams of gore has wearied out her jaws and stained her stripes in foul clotted corruption, behold her work, and grieve that her appetite fails; so wanders the augur fordone among the Aonian corpses: now would he have a hundred arms, a hundred hands to fight with; already it irks him to squander menaces in vain, and he could wish the foe would rise against him.

[296] Here the son of mighty Hercules, there Actor destroys the sluggish Sidonians, each followed by his own band along a path of slaughter; the grass is black and stagnant with gore, the tents totter and sway in streams of blood, the earth reeks, and the breathing of sleep is mingled with the gasps of death; none of the slumberers lifts his head or turns his gaze, so deep the shade wherewith the winged god broods over the wretched ones, and unseals their eyes but as they die. Ialmenus had spent his last night in unsleeping merriment and with the lute, never to behold to-morrow's dawn, and was singing a Sidonian paean; under the influence of the god his languid neck sank leftward, and his lyre pillowed his drooping head; through his breast Agylleus drives the blade, and pierces the right hand that grasps the tortoiseshell, and the fingers trembling among their well-known strings. The tables are flooded by the dreadful stream; everywhere flow blood and water mingled, and the wine returned to the goblets and deep mixing-bowls. Fierce Actor catches Thamyris in his brother's embrace, Tagus stabs garlanded Echetus in the back, Danaus shears off the head of Hebrus: unwitting alas! he meets his fate, and mirthfully his life passes to the shades, saving the pains of cruel death. Calpetus, lying on the cold ground beneath his trusty chariot-wheels, scared with his heavy breathing his Aonian steeds as they cropped their native grass: his mouth o'erflows with liquor, and his slumber wine-inflamed grows agitated; lo! the Inachian prophet

pierces his throat as he lies: the wine is forced out in a great rush of blood, and his murmurs perish in the stream. Perchance his sleep foretold his doom, and in his dream he saw with dismay Thiodamas and a black ruin that was Thebes.

[327] The fourth period of slumberous night remained, when the clouds have shed their dew and not all the stars shine bright, and Bootes flies before the pantings of a mightier care. And now, the task itself failing them, prudent Actor calls Thiodamas: "Sufficient for the Pelasgians is this unhopèd-for triumph; scarce any, methinks, of so large a company have escaped cruel death, save the base cowards whom the gory flood conceals, polluted but alive; set a limit to success: dread Thebes too hath her deities. Perchance we too may lose those who late have favoured us." He consented, and raising his dripping hands to the stars: "These spoils, O Phoebus, the trophies of the night thou didst reveal, I present to thee, I, the bold champion of thy tripods and thy faithful priest, not yet cleansed with water, for this is my sacrifice to thee. If I have not disgraced thy commands and have borne thy instancy, come often to me, often deign to take possession of my mind. Rude is thy guerdon now, maimed limbs and human blood, but if ever, O Pæan, thou wilt bestow on me my native home and the temples that I long for, O Lycian god, forget not my vow, but demand as many sumptuous gifts and as many bulls for thy sacred portals." He spoke, and recalled his comrades from the glad work of arms.

[347] Among these by the will of Fate had come Calydonian Hopleur and Maenalian Dymas, both favourites and close companions of their princes, after whose deaths they grieve and think scorn of living. First Hopleur incites the Arcadian: "Renowned Dymas, hast thou no care for thy hapless prince once slain, though perchance already birds and Theban dogs possess him? What then will ye bring home to your country, yet Arcadians? Lo! his stern mother meets you returning, and asks "Where is his body?" But in my heart unburied Tydeus gives me no rest, though more enduring of limb nor so worthy of lament for an untimely death. Yet fain would I go and search everywhere, high and low, over the ruthless plain, or break into the midst of Thebes." Dymas makes reply: "I swear by these moving stars, by my chieftain's wandering shade, to me a

power divine, my grief inspires my resolve; my downcast mind hath long looked for a companion, but now I will lead the way” – and straight he stars upon the road, and turning his sad face to heaven thus speaks: “Cynthia, queen of the mysteries of night, if as they say thou dost vary in threefold wise the aspect of thy godhead, and in different shape comest down into the woodland, ’tis he who was lately thy companion and the glorious nursling of thy groves, ’tis thine own boy, Diana – now at least look upon us! – ’tis he we search for.” The goddess stooped her horns and made bright her kindly star, and illumined the battle-field with near-approaching chariot. The plain appears and Thebes and lofty Cithaeron: so when fell Jupiter cleaves the sky at night with thunder, the clouds divide and the bright flash reveals the stars, and the world is suddenly shown to watching eyes. He caught the rays, and by the same piercing light Hopleus sees Tydeus; from afar they joyfully beckon to each other through the darkness, and each lifts his beloved burden on his bowed shoulders, as though it were restored to life and rescued from cruel death; no word to they utter, nor for a long while dare to weep; unfriendly day is nigh at hand, and the sunrise that threatens to betray. Mute they go with long strides through the sad silences and grieve that the exhausted gloom is paling to the dawn.

[384] Fate is envious of devoted souls, and good luck gores rarely with great ventures. Already they see the camp and in thought are at the gates, and lighter grows the burden, when there is a sudden cloud of dust and a sound behind them. It was bold Amphiön at the head of his troop, bidden by his chief to explore the night and the guarded camp; he is the first to see far away on the pathless plain – not yet had the light dispersed all the shadows – something stirring faint and doubtful to the sight and bodies moving; then on a sudden he discovers the fraud and cries: “Halt, whoe’er ye be!” but ’tis plain they are the foe; on go the hapless ones, and fear, though not for themselves; then he threatens the anxious pair with death, and flings his spear, but, aiming in purposed error, sends it high and far beyond them. Before the eyes of Dymas it fell, who by chance was in front: he halted; but Aepytus, proud of soul, cared not to lose his throw, and transfixed the back of Hopleus, grazing thereby the shoulder of Tydeus as he hung. Hopleus falls, not yet forgetful of his peerless

chieftain, and dies still clutching him – happy were he ignorant that the corpse was lost – and in such wise descends to the cruel shades.

[405] Dymas had turned and seen, and knew that battle was joined, and doubted whether to use arms or prayers against the oncoming foe: wrath urges arms, fortune bids him try prayer not daring; neither resource brings confidence. Anger forbade entreaty; before his feet he places the hapless body, and flings on his left arm a heavy tiger's hide that he wore by chance upon his back, and holding out his bared blade he stands on guard, and turns to face every dart, prepared both to slay and to be slain: as a lioness lately whelped, beset by Numidian hunters in her savage lair, stands above her young, erect but doubting in her mind, and utters a wild and melancholy roar; full well could she scatter their array and snap their weapons in her jaws, but love of her offspring overcomes the fierceness of her heart, and from the midst of her rage she looks round upon her cubs. And now the hero's left hand has been cut away, though Amphion bade them use no violence, and the boy is dragged along by his hair with face upturned.

[422] Then at last, too late a suppliant, he lets fall his blade and makes entreaty: "Carry him less roughly, I pray you, by the cradle of lightning-born Bacchus and the flight of Ino and your own Palaemon's tender years; if any of you know at home the joy of children, if any here is a father, grant the lad some few handfuls of dust, and a little fire: lo! he implores, the implores you with mute countenance; better that I should sate the accursed fowls, cast me to the wild beasts, 'twas I that made him dare the fight." "If so great be thy desire to bury thy prince," Amphion cried, "tell us, what plan of war have the scared Pelasgians, what purpose they in their broken heartless state? Quick, out with it all, and we grant thee to depart alive and give burial to thy chief!" The Arcadian shuddered, and on the instant plunged his sword up to the hilt in his own breast. "Was this then lacking," he cried, "to crown our woes, that I should dishonour and betray Argos in her hour of need? That were too dearly bought, nor would he himself wish for the pyre at such a cost." So speaking, he tore a mighty gash in his breast, and casting him down upon the lad with his last breath murmured: "Yet receive meanwhile this burial with me!" Thus in the longed-for embraces of

their chiefs do both the noble-minded pair, Aetolian alike and famed Arcadian, breathe out their peerless souls and taste of death. Ye too are consecrate, though my sons soar for a less lofty lyre, and will go down the unforgetful years. Perchance too Euryalus will not spurn his comrade shades, and the glory of Phrygian Nisus will not say them nay.

[449] But fierce Amphion sends in triumph heralds to report his doings to the king, and inform him of the crafty attack, and deliver back the captured bodies; he himself proceeds to insult the beleaguered Pelasgians, and to display their comrades' severed heads. Meanwhile from the summit of the walls the Greeks perceive Thiodamas returning, nor conceal any more their joyous outbursts. But when they saw their naked swords and arms all red with recent carnage, a fresh shout leaps upward to the broad sky, and eager throngs hang from the rampart's top, while each one looks for his own. Even so a crowd of nestlings, seeing their mother returning through the air afar, would fain go to meet her, and lean gaping from the edge of the nest, and would even now be falling, did she not spread all her motherly bosom to save them, and chide them with loving wings. And while they recount their hidden deeds and the swift work of silent war, and clasp their friends in a long embrace, they look for Hopleus and complain of Dymas' slowness: and lo! Amphion, the commander of the Theban band, had drawn nigh in haste; no long delight had he of his late bloodshed, when he saw the ground a heap of countless bodies, and whole race in the death-throes of one universal doom. Such a tremor as falls on those whom the brand called forth from heaven has smitten, seized now the warrior, and in one spasm voice, sight, and blood all fail, and as he still attempts a groan his charger unbidden wheels him round; 'mid a whirl of dust the troop flees back.

[474] Not yet had they entered the barred gates of Thebes, when the Argive band, flushed with their nocturnal triumph, leapt forth into the plain; over weapons and prostrate bodies and earth befouled by heaps of slain, and blood still warm with life men and horn-footed steeds go rushing: the heavy hoof crushes the limbs, and a rain of gore bathes and clogs the axles. Sweet is it to the heroes to go by such a road, as if they proudly trampled Sidonian homes and Thebes herself

in blood. Capaneus cheers them on: "Long enough, Pelasgians, has our valour lain in hiding; now, now is victory fair in my eyes, in the full blaze of day! On, men, with me to open conflict! Raise the dust and shout your battle-cry! Sure is the omen of my right hand, terrible the fury of my drawn sword!" So he speaks; Adrastus and the Argive prince with eagerness inflame their ire, and the augur follows in sadder mood. Already they are nigh the walls – and still Amphion is telling of the new disaster – and would straight have entered the hapless city, had not Megareus from a high watch-tower exclaimed in haste: "Shut the gates, sentry, everywhere! the enemy comes."

[493] Overmastering fear sometimes gives strength: quick closes every gate; only while Echion is slow to bar the Ogygian, courageous Spartan warriors break in, and fall in the threshold slain, Panopeus, dweller upon Taygetus, and Oebalus, swimmer of rough Eurotas; thou too, Alcidas, who didst prove thy worth in every wrestling-ground, and of late win victory in Nemean dust, thou for whom the son of Tyndareus himself fastened thy first gloves; dying thou lookest toward the vault where thy master shines; straightway the god sinks with averted star. Thee the Oebalian woodland, thee the Laconian maiden's deceitful river-bank shall mourn, and the flood that the feigned swan once sang of; thou shalt be wept by Trivia's Amyclaeon Nymphs, and thy mother who taught thee the laws and valiant rules of war shall lament that thou wert too apt a scholar. Thus does Mavors wreak his fury on the threshold of Echion's town.

[509] At length Acron, heaving with his shoulders, and Ialmenides, leaning all his body's weight, forced to the bronze-clad doors: with such strength do groaning bullocks cleave side by side the long-unploughed fields of Pangaeum. Yet equal is the loss to their labour's gain, for they have kept the foe within, and shut out their own countrymen. Ormenus the Grecian is slain within the walls, and while Amyntor stretches imploring arms and pours out prayers, his head is severed, and words and face alike fall to earth, and at the blow a shapely necklace drops from his neck into the hostile dust. Meanwhile the rampart is breached, the first lines give way, and already troops of infantry are at the walls; but the horses fear to leap the wide trenches and shrink back in alarm, and panic-struck at the vast abyss marvel that they are driven on; now they start forward

from the edge, now of their own accord recoil upon the reins. Some tear from the ground the planted palisades, others hack at the defences of the gates and sweat to force away the iron barriers, and with beams and sounding bronze drive stones from their places; some hurl torches roofwards and exult when they stick fast, others assail foundations and with the blind tortoise sap the base of hollow towers.

[531] But the Tyrians – their only means of safety – crown the summit of the battlements, and hurl charred stakes and shining darts of steel against the foe, and stones torn from their own walls, and missiles that catch fire as they go through the void of air; a fierce deluge streams from the roof-tops, and the barred windows spew forth hissing javelins. As when the tempests sit motionless in the clouds over Malea or tall Ceraunia's mount and are ranged about the darkened hills, then suddenly swoop upon the sails beneath: so is the Argive host overwhelmed by the Agenorian arms; yet the relentless rain turns aside neither face nor breast, the warriors keep their gaze steady upon the walls, forgetful of death and seeing nought but their own weapons. While Antheus drives his scythed car round the Theban walls the violent impact of an Ogygian spear strikes him from above; the reins are torn from his grasp, and, scarce alive, he is hurled to the rear upon his back, but stays caught by his greaves; strange sight and horrible fate of war! his arms are dragged along, the smoking wheels and the spear with third furrow ploughing the earth; tossed to and fro the head follows in a long wake of dust, and the broad track of the outspread locks shows clear.

[552] But now the trumpet's clangour smites the city with dismay, and its harsh sound penetrates the barricaded doors. They divide the approaches, and in every gate there stands a fierce ensign-bearer, raising high for all to see their sufferings or their joys. Dreadful is the sight within, scarce Mars himself would rejoice to behold it; Grief and Fury and Panic, and Rout enwrapped in blinding gloom rend with many-voiced discord the frenzied, horror-stricken town. One would think the battle was within; men are hurrying to and fro about the citadel, the streets are full of clamour, everywhere they see in imagination sword and fire, everywhere cruel chains. Fear anticipates the future; already houses and temples are thronged, and the

ungrateful shrines are ringed with lamentation. Old and young alike are in the grip of one universal terror; the old men pray for death, the young flush with ardour and grow pale by turns, the houses rock with the shriek of women's wailing. Children weep, nor know the cause of their weeping, but stand aghast and tremble at their mothers' sobs. Them love constrains, nor does utmost need admit of shame; with their own hands they give weapons to the men, with their own voices they fire them to wrath and valour, and exhort them, and rush with them to battle, nor cease amid their tears to show them their ancestral homes and helpless babes. So when a husbandman, on plunder bent, has aroused the armed bees from their rocky cavern, the angry swarm is in an uproar, inciting each other with loud buzzing, and all fly in the enemy's faces; but soon with failing wings they clasp their waxen home, and bewail the rifled store of honey, and press to their bosoms the laboured combs.

[580] The crowd is filled with the strife of opposing tongues, and spreads discordant passions; some, with no muttered voice, but outspokenly and in open tumult, bid the brother restore the kingdom; in their distress all reverence for their prince is lost: "Let him come, and here make up the count of his bargained year, and salute – unhappy exile! – his Cadmean home and his father's blindness; why should my blood atone the fraud and the royal miscreant's traitorous crime?" Then others: "Too late is good faith now, he would rather conquer." Others in tearful suppliant throng implore Tiresias, and ask – the only solace in adversity – to learn the future. But he withholds and keeps hidden the destinies of heaven: "Is it because our monarch so trusted my warning counsels before, when I forbade perfidious warfare? Yet, unhappy Thebes," he cries, "that art doomed to destruction should I be dumb, I cannot endure miserably to hear of thy fall and with these empty eyes to drink in Argolic flames. Let me yield, O Piety! ho! maiden, set the altars, let us inquire of the gods above." She obeys, and keenly gazing informs him of blood-red points of flame and a twofold fire upon the altar, and now the middle blaze yet rises high and clear; then she teaches her doubting sire that the ruddy flame is rolled and shaped with double coil into the ghostly likeness of a serpent and illuminates her father's gloom. He straightway spreads his arms about the garlanded fire, and absorbs

the prophetic vapours with glowing countenance. His hair rises in horror and dismay, and the grey locks madly lift high the covering fillets: one would think his eyes were open, and the lost glow had returned again to his cheeks. At length he gave vent in words to the flood of his frenzy: "Listen, ye guilty sons of Labdacus, and hear the last sacrifice of all! Kindly salvation cometh, but by a hard path. The snake of Mars demands a victim and a cruel offering: the latest born of the serpent-brood must fall, at this price alone can victory come. Happy is he whose death shall win so great a guerdon!"

[616] Creon, sad at heart and mourning as yet only for his country and the common fate, stood by the stern altar of the prophetic seer: when with the shock of a sudden blow, as if a flung lance had pierced his breast, he heard, near dead with horror, and knew Menoeceus was demanded. Fear points the truth, nor suffers doubt: he is benumbed by anguish, and any icy dread assails the father's heart; even so does the Trinacrian coast sustain the sea hurled back from the Libyan surge. Then humbly clasping the knees of the seer, who, full of Phoebus, bids him make speed, and touching the lips that chant the oracle, he entreats him to be silent, all in vain; already rumour has seized the word and flies abroad, and Thebes proclaims the oracle.

[628] Come, now, tell who fired the youth with joy in a noble death – for never without haven's aid is this mind given to men – begin thou, unforgetting Clio, for the ages are in thy keeping, and all the storied annals of the past.

[632] The goddess Virtue, close companion of the throne of Jove, whence rarely she is wont to be vouchsafed to the world and to bless the earth, whether the almighty Father hath sent her, or she herself hath chosen to dwell in men worthy of her – how gladly then did she leap down from the heavenly places! The shining stars gave way before her, and those fires that she herself had fixed in hevaen; already she treads the earth nor is her countenance far distant from the sky; but it pleased her to change her aspect, and she becomes sagacious Manto, that her speech might have full credence, and by deceit puts off her former mien. The look of awe, the austerity were gone, something of charm remained, and a softer beauty; the sword was laid aside, and she took instead the prophet's wand; her robe falls to her feet, and on her stern brow the wool is bound, where

before was laurel; yet her grave aspect and more than mortal strides betray the goddess. Even so at Amphitryon's son did his Lydian mistress laugh, when putting off the bristling hide he marred the Sidonian raiment with his vast shoulders, and wrought confusion in the distaff and smashed the timbrels with his hand.

[650] Nor does she find thee, O Menoeceus, an unworthy victim, nor unfit to receive so solemn a behest, as thou standest before the Dircaean tower; the huge gate unbarred, thou wert slaying the Danaans, and Martian Haemon in like manner. But though ye were of one blood, and in everything brothers, thou hadst first place: heaps of dead are piled around thee, every dart finds its mark, no stroke but a victim falls – nor yet had Virtue come to aid – neither mind nor hand is idle, the eager weapons are never still, even the Sphinx, the guardian of his casque, appears to rage, the image, animated by the sight of blood, flashes out, and the bespattered brass gleams: when the goddess stays the warrior's hand upon the sword-hilt: "Great-hearted youth, than whom none were more surely known of Mars to be of Cadmus' fighting seed, leave these mean affrays, such is not the prowess reserved for thee: the stars are calling thee, thou shalt send thy soul to heaven – conceive a nobler destiny! This it is that inspires my father's frenzy at the joyful altars, this the flames and the fibres demand, this doth Apollo urge: they call for an earth-born one on behalf of our country's common life. Rumour repeats the counsel, the folk of Cadmus, certain of thee, rejoice; take the gods' word to heart, and snatch a glorious fate. Go, I pray thee, and hasten, lest Haemon by thy side forestall thee." So speaking she assured his wavering mind with the silent touch of her mighty hand, and left herself within his heart. No more swiftly does the cypress blasted by the lightning flash drink up the deadly flame from stem to summit than did the youth, possessed by the mighty deity, raise high his spirit and fall straight in love with death. But when he marked her gait and habit as she turned, and beheld Manto on a sudden rise from earth into the clouds, he was astounded. "I follow thee," he cries, "whoever of the gods hast called me, nor am I slow to obey:" yet even as he retired he pierce Agreus of Pylos, who was threatening the rampart. His squires receive him, weary from the battle; then, as he proceeds, the mob in joy hails him as peace-bringer, preserver and

god, and kindles within him a noble flame.

[686] And now he is making his way to the city in breathless hate, rejoicing to have avoided his unhappy parents, when his father – both stopped, with speech cut short and eyes downcast. At length his sire began: “What new chance has taken thee from a battle lately joined? What design hast thou, that is weightier than war? Tell me, my son, I entreat thee, why is thy look so fierce? Why this angry pallor in thy face, why do thy eyes meet not thy father’s gaze? ’Tis plain, thou hast heard the oracle. By thy years and mine, my son, and by thy wretched mother’s breast, I pray thee, lad, listen not to the seer! Do the gods deign to inspire an impious dotard, with sightless face and blinded eyes, stricken even as dread Oedipus? What if the king be using treachery and deceitful fraud, fearing in his desperate case our noble blood and thy valour that is renowned above our chieftains? Perchance they are his words, which we deem to be the gods’; ’tis he that gives this counsel! Suffer not thy hot blood to carry thee away, but delay a trifling space, passion is ever a bad guide; grant this boon, I entreat thee, to thy father. So may thy temples be marked with the grey hairs of age, and thyself be a parent, and come, rash boy, to fear like me: lay not my home desolate. Do other sires and the babes of strangers move thee? If thou hast any shame, pity first thine own. This is duty, this is true honour; there lies but empty glory and wind-blown renown and a name that will be lost in death. Nor is it from a father’s fears that I urge thee: go, join in the fray, go, force thy way through the Danaan lines where swords are thickest: I do not hold thee back; let me but cleanse thy quivering wounds and stanch with my tears thy welling blood, and send thee back again and yet again to the cruel battle. This does Thebes rather choose.”

[718] So spake he, with his arms in close embrace about his son’s neck, but the youth, once vowed to the gods, was moved by neither tears nor words; nay, at their prompting he met his sire with secret fraud and turned his fears: “Good father, thou art mistaken, thy fears are vain. No warning or speech of frenzied seers disturbs me, or troubles me with empty terrors; let crafty Tiresias keep his chantings for himself and his own daughter; nought should I care, if Apollo himself were to open his shrine and confront me with his ravings. No, ’tis the sore hurt of my loved brother that takes me back of my

own will to the city; my Haemon groans from the wound of an Inachian spear; scarce out of the dust of battle, from between the lines – the Argives had already seized him – but I waste time; go, cheer his distress, and tell his bearers to spare him and carry him gently; I go to find Aëtion who is skilled to join up wounds and recall the life-blood's ebbing stream." He breaks off and speeds away in the other's breast confusion reigns and a dark cloud of woe; he wavers uncertainly between devoted love and harsh, discordant fears; but Fate impels him to believe.

[738] Meanwhile impetuous Capaneus drives o'er the battle-plain the troops that issue from the breached gates, now squadrons of horse, now regiments of foot, now chariots that trample the corpses of their own charioteers; he it is that rends high towers with stones and many a whizzing dart, he it is that routs the cohorts and reeks in gore. Now he whirls the winged bullet and scatters strange wounds all around, now he swings his arm aloft and sends the javelin flying, nor ever a lance mounts the roof-top, that brings not down its man, and falls back streaming with blood. No longer does the Pelopean phalanx believe Oenides or Hippomedon slain, or the bard or yet the Arcadian, but rather that their comrades' souls are all rejoined in his one frame, so fills he all the battle-field. Nor age, nor dress, nor beauty moves him; alike on those that fight and those that entreat he pours his fury; none dare resist, or try the chances of war; afar as he rages they shudder at his armour and terrible crest and helmet's front.

[756] But the devoted Menoeceus stood on a chosen part of the wall, sacred already to behold, and majestic in mien beyond his wont, as though suddenly descended to earth from heaven above, bareheaded and manifest to view; he gazed down upon the lines of warriors, and stilled the clamours of the field and bade the war be silent. "Ye gods of battle, and thou, O Phoebus, who grantest me a death so glorious, vouchsafe to Thebes the joys which I have covenanted for and bought with all my lavish lifeblood. Roll back the tide of war, and hurl against captive Lerna her base remnants; let father Inachus turn away from his dishonoured sons as they nurse the spear-wound in their backs. But restore to the Tyrians by my death their temples, fields and homes, children and wives; if I, your chosen victim, have pleased you, if I heard the prophet's oracle with no

panic-stricken ear, and took it to my heart ere ever Thebes believed it, reward Amphion's town in my stead, and reconcile, I pray, the sire whom I deceived." So he speaks, and with his glittering blade tears at the noble soul that long has disdained its body and grieved to be held fast, and probes for the life and rends it with one wound. Then with his blood he sprinkled the towers and purified the walls, and grasping still his sword hurled himself into the midst of the lines and strove to fall upon the fierce Achaeans. But Piety and Virtue clasped and bore his body lightly to the earth; for his spirit long since is at the throne of Jove, and demands for itself a crown 'mid the highest stars.

[783] And now rejoicing they bear the hero within the walls, recovering his body with no labour: of its own accord the Tantalid host in reverence withdrew; he is borne on the necks of youths in a long train, and is acclaimed by the glad praise of all the populace as patron of the town above Cadmus and Amphion; with garlands and all the honour of the spring they heap his lifeless limbs, and lay his venerated body in his forefathers' tomb. Then when their lauds are finished they resume the fight, and his sire, his wrath appeased, sheds tears and joins in the lament, and his mother can weep her fill at last: "Was it then to make atonement and devote thy life for cruel Thebes that I nourished thee, illustrious boy, as though I were some worthless mother? What crime then had I wrought, what god so hated me? No incestuous offspring have I borne in unnatural intercourse, nor given unhallowed progeny to my own son. What matters that? Jocasta hath her sons, and sees them leaders and kings: but we must make cruel expiation for the war, that the brothers, sons of Oedipus, may exchange their diadems – doth this please thee, O author of the blow? But why complain I of men and gods? Thou, cruel Menoeceus, thou before all didst haste to slay thy unhappy mother! Whence came this love of death? What cursed madness seized thy mind? What did I conceive, what misbegotten child did I bear, so different from myself? Verily 'tis the snake of Mars, and the ground that burgeoned fresh with our armed sires – thence comes that desperate valour, that o'ermastering love of war: nought comes of his mother. Lo! of thine own will and pleasure slain, ay, even against the will of Fate, thou forcest an entrance to the gloomy shades. I was fearing the Danaans and the shafts of Capaneus: 'twas

this hand, this hand of thine I should have feared, and the sword I myself once gave thee in my folly. See how the glade is wholly buried in his throat! None of the Danaans could have made a deeper thirst.”

[815] Even yet would the unhappy woman be speaking and making her sorrow known on every side; but her companions and her handmaids bear her away, hating those who would console her, and keep her in her chamber; there she sits, her cheeks deep ploughed by her nails, nor looks towards the light, nor listens to entreaties, nor turns her face that is ever fixed on the ground – her voice, her reason lost. So a fierce tigress robbed of her cubs lie desolate in her Scythian lair and licks the traces on the warm stone; her fury is gone, the savagery and hunger of her ravenous jaws are abated, and the flocks and herds go careless by: she sees them and lies still, for where are they for whom she should feed her dugs, or, long-awaited, heap up the abundant prey?

[827] So far of arms and trumpets, of swords and wounds I tell; but now Capaneus must be raised high to do battle with the star-bearing vault. No more may I sing after the wonted way of bards; a mightier frenzy must be summoned from the Aonian groves. Dare with me, goddesses all: whether that madness of his was sent from deepest night and the Stygian sisters dogged the banner of Capaneus and forced him to the assault against Jove, or whether ’twas valour that brooked no bouds, nor headlong love of glory, or utter destruction’s appointed doom, or success that goes before disaster and heaven luring to ruin in its wrath.

[837] Now earthly battles grow mean in her hero’s eyes, he is tired of the endless slaughter; long ago have his own weapons and those of the Greeks been spent, his right arm grows weary, he looks up to the sky. Soon with frowning gaze he measures the lofty battlements, and gets him a skyward leading path of steps innumerable, a tree guarding its either flank, and terribly from afar he brandishes a flaring torch of oaken faggots: his armour glows red, and a glaze is kindled on his shield. “By this road,” he cries, “by this road my lofty valour bids me go to Thebes, where yonder tower is slippery with Menoeceus’ blood. I shall try what sacrifice avails, and whether Apollo be false.” He speaks, and climbs with alternate step exultant

against the captured wall: even as the vault beheld the Aloidæ amid the clouds, when impious earth rose high and was like to look down upon the gods; not yet had mighty Pelion been added and Ossa already touched the affrighted Thunderer.

[853] Then indeed aghast, upon the utmost verge of doom, as though the last destruction threatened, or Bellona with blood-stained brand drew nigh to raze their towers to the ground, from every roof in emulous haste they hurl huge stones and stakes, and whirl the strong lash of the Balearic sling – what hope is there in javelins and the vague flight of arrows? – nay, they eagerly ply their engines and impel great rocks against him. But he, unmoved by missiles assailing him in front or rear, hovers aloft in empty air, yet sure as though he planted his steps on the flat earth, and strives onward, and draws nigh in the teeth of fell destruction: just as a river pressing upon the timbers of an ancient bride assaults it with unresting waters, and now the stones gape and the beams are loosened; with the more violence – for he knows it – and greater surge he shakes and drags at the weakening mass, till the swift current has burst all the fastenings, and triumphantly draws breath again, and flows on with unhampered course. And when he stood out high above the long-attempted summit, and in towering height looked down upon the trembling city, and terrified Thebes with his huge shadow, he taunted the astounded folk: “Are these Amphion’s insignificant towers – for shame! – are these the compliant walls that followed an unwarlike song? – that ancient, lying tale of Thebes? And what glory is there in overthrowing a fortress built by a feeble lyre?” Therewith he falls with foot and hand upon the masonry, and fiercely destroys the jointing and the flooring that would stay him; connecting bridges fall, the stone curbs of the covering roof give way, and again he uses the dismembered mass, and hurls down rocky fragments on temples and on houses, and now he is shattering the city with its own fortress-walls.

[883] Meanwhile about Jove’s throne the Argive and the Tyrian deities were clamouring in diverse factions: the impartial sire beholds their wrath blaze high around him, and marks that he restrains it. Beneath his stepmother’s gaze Liber regards his sire askance, and makes lament: “Where now is that ruthless hand?” he

cries, “where alas! is my cradle of fire, the thunderbolt, ay, where the thunderbolt?” Apollo too laments the homes which once his command appointed; the Tirynthian weighs Lerna against Thebes, and hesitates with ready-strung bow; the winged Danaan grieves for his mother’s Argos; Venus weeps for Harmonia’s folk, and fearing her husband stands apart and gazes at Gradivus in silent anger. Bold Tritonia blames the Tyrian gods, while speechless rage tortures the heart of silent Juno. Yet undisturbed is the peace of Jove; and lo! their quarrels ceased when in mid-heaven Capaneus was heard: “Are there no gods among you,” he cries, “who stand for panic-stricken Thebes? Where are the sluggard sons of this accursed land, Bacchus and Alcides? Any of lesser name I am ashamed to challenge. Rather come thou – what worthier antagonist? For lo! Semele’s ashes and her tomb are in my power! – come thou, and strive with all thy flames against me, thou, Jupiter! Or art thou braver at frightening timid maidens with thy thunder, and razing the towers of thy father-in-law Cadmus?”

[907] Loud rose the gods’ indignant clamour at his words; Jove himself laughed at the madman, and shaking the thick mass of sacred locks: “What hope has man after Phlegra’s arrogant assault?” he says, “and must thou too be struck down?” As he hesitates the gods throng round him, gnashing their teeth and crying for the avenging weapons, nor any longer dares his anxious consort resist the Fates. The heavenly palace itself thunders, though no sign is given, the clouds themselves gather and the storms collect without the blast of any wind: one would think Iapetus had burst his Stygian chains, and that fettered Inarime or Aetna had been lifted to the heights above. Such things the denizens of heaven feel shame to fear; but when they see the hero stand midway in the dizzy height of air, and summon them to insane battle, they marvel in silence, and grow pale, doubting the thunderbolt’s power.

[921] Then above the summit of the Ogygian tower the vault began to bellow strangely, and the sky to be lost in darkness; yet still he grasps the battlements he no longer sees, and as often as the lightnings flashed through the rent storm-clouds: “Ay here,” he shouts, “here at last are the fires ’tis right to use against Thebes! From them I may renew my torch, and awaken my smouldering

oaken brand.” Even as he spoke, the thunderbolt struck him, hurled with the whole might of Jove: his crest first vanished into the clouds, the blackened shield-boss dripped, and all the hero’s limbs are now illumined. The armies both give way, in terror where he may fall, what squadrons he may strike with his burning body. He feels the flame hissing within him and his helmet and hair afire, and trying to push away the galling cuirass with his hand, touches the scorched steel beneath his breast. He stands nevertheless, and turning towards heaven pants out his life and leans his smoking breast on the hated battlements, lest he should fall; but his earthly frame deserts the hero, and his spirit is released; yet had his limbs been consumed a whit more slowly, he might have expected a second thunderbolt.

BOOK 11

[1] When great-souled Capaneus had spent the fury of his unrighteous valour and gasped forth the Levin-fire that lodged within him, and when the long track of avenging flame that marked his fall to earth had left its brand upon the walls: victorious Jove with his right hand composed the shaken vault, and with his countenance restored the light of heaven. The gods welcomed him, as though he were breathless and weary after Phlegra's fight, or had piled smoking Aetna upon Enceladus. Grasping the fragment of a shattered tower the hero lies, with a scowl yet upon his face, and leaving deeds for all the world to tell of, deeds that even the Thunderer might praise. As vast as in Avernus lies outstretched the defiler of Apollo's mother, whom even the birds behold aghast when they emerge from his cavernous breast and view his huge extended limbs, while the wretched fibres grow again to feed them: so burdens he the earth, flung prostrate, and scars the hostile fields and the plain that gasps with the heavenly sulphur. Thebes draws breath once more, and the bowed suppliants rise in the temples; vows and desperate wailing have an end, and the mothers dare to put down their little ones.

[21] But the Achaeans are swept over the plain in scattered, aimless rout. No more do they fear the squadrons of the foe or mortal steel: all have the anger of Jove before their eyes, all in their terror see their armour blazing and hear his thunder ringing in their helmets; Jove himself seemed to pursue and to oppose his fires to their flight. The warriors of Agenor press hard upon them, and use the tumult of the sky: as when upon Massylian meads a lion has crushed within his mighty jaws the untamed monarchs of the herd, and departs, his hunger sated; then growling bears draw nigh and greedy wolves, and with abated rage cowardly lap the blood of an alien prey. Here Eurymedon pursues, with armour rustic and uncouth and rustic weapons in his hand and native skill to arouse panic terrors – his sire was Pan; there goes Alatreus forth, tender in years for such emprise, and though a boy, matching his youthful father: fortunate both, but happier he who delights in such progeny; nor is it easy to discern whose weapons ring the louder, from whose arm more mightily flies

the spear.

[39] The ramparts are thronged with a dense mass of fugitives. What changes dost thou bring, Gradivus! But lately the Pelasgians were climbing Cadmus' walls, now they defend their own! Even so the clouds return, so when the south winds are blowing field after field is swept by the blast, so the surge now uncovers, now clothes with its white foam the thirsty sand. Far and wide perish the Tirynthian soldiery, that counterfeit the spoils of their native god; the stern son of Amphitryon mourns from the stars above to see the Nemean skins and the clubs and quivers like his own all drenched in blood. Upon the ironclad summit of the Argive tower stood Enyeus, foremost to cheer to prosperous battle with the trumpet, but then he was giving welcome signal to the distressed, and urging their flight and safe retirement to the camp: when suddenly through the air fell a sidelong blow, and as he sped the sound his hand, just as it was, was fixed to his left ear; already his spirit flies forth upon the empty breeze, already his frozen lips are silent, the trumpet completed its call alone.

[57] And now Tisiphone, having wrought her crimes and weary of the bloodshed of two peoples, seeks to conclude the fight with the brothers' conflict; nor trusts she her own strength for so dire a fray, unless she can rouse from her infernal abode her companion Megaera and her kindred snakes to battle. Therefore she withdrew to an empty vale afar, and dug into the ground her Stygian blade, and muttered into the earth the name of the absent one, and – a sign indubitable to the Elysian realm – raised aloft a horned serpent from her hair with long-drawn hisses: he was the prince of her caerulean tresses, and straightway hearing him earth shuddered and sea and sky, and the Father glanced again at his Aetnaean fires. The other heard the sound: by chance she was standing near her sire, while Capaneus was belauded by the whole train of Dis, and refreshed his glorious shade in the Stygian streams. Forthwith she broke through the massive earth, and stood beneath the stars; the ghosts rejoice, and as the nether darkness grows less thick, so wanes the light above.

[75] Her fell sister receives her, and clasps her hand and speaks: "Thus far, my sister, have I been able to sustain our Stygian father's dread commands and the frenzy laid upon me, alone upon the earth

and exposed to a hostile world, while ye in Elysium constrain the unresisting ghosts. No mean reward is mine for my pains, my labours are not vain: this deep-drenched battle-field, these waters that reek with blood, the countless swarms that gladden Lethe's bank – these are the tokens of my power, my signs of triumph. But what care I for these? Let Mars enjoy them, let Enyo boast and spread the story. Thou sawest – manifest surely was he in the Stygian shades – the chief whose jaws were fouled with blood, whose face dripped black corruption; insatiable, he ate the head of his hapless foe, which I did give him. Just now – was it not so? – the sound of a terrible din came down to you from the stars: me did that awful storm assail, 'twas I who mingling with the hero's fury-stricken arms laughed at the warring gods and the levin's mighty wrath. But now, sister, long toil – I confess it – has wearied out my spirit, and my arm is slow; the infernal yew languishes in the air of heaven, and the too strong influence of the stars drowns my unaccustomed snakes. Thou who still hast all thy rage, whose tresses are still riotous and fresh from Cocytus' fount, join thou thy strength to mine. 'Tis no common fray or Martian battle that we prepare, but brothers – though kindly Faith and Duty resist, they will be o'ercome – ay, brothers shall draw the sword in combat hand-to-hand. A noble work! Gird we ourselves with deadly hate, with armed discord. Dost thou hesitate? Nay, choose which banner thou wilt bear. Both are compliant and will do our will; but the mob is double-minded, and I fear his mother's words and Antigone's persuasive tongue, lest they somewhat hinder our design. Ay, even he, who is wont to weary us with his entreaties and call on the Furies to avenge his eyes, already feels his fatherhood; already they say he weeps alone, far from the haunts of men; ay, verily, I like not to invade Thebes and the abode I know so well without thy succour. Command thou the impious exile, incite the Argive to the crime; see that the mild Adrastus prevail not, nor the Lernaean host delay thee. Go, and return to the mutual fray – my foe!”

[113] Their duties thus assigned, the sisters went their different ways: as from the two poles of the world South wind and North make war, one nurtured on Rhipaeian snows, the other in Libyan sands: rivers, seas, clouds and woods resound, and soon is the ruin

seen, the husbandmen lament their losses, yet pity the sailors whelmed upon the deep. When from Olympus' top the exalted Sire beheld them pollute the air, and saw Hyperion's frightened orb beflecked and tainted, with stern utterance he thus began: "Ye heavenly ones, we have seen armed fury pushed to the uttermost bound of right, and a war that yet was lawful, though one man engaged in impious conflict and dared to fall by my right hand. But now a duel unspeakable approaches, a combat yet unknown to miserable earth: look not upon it! Let no gods countenance such a crime, let it be hid from Jove; enough is it to have seen the deadly feast of Tantalus and the guilty altars of Lycaon, and Mycenae bringing the stars in hurried train upon the sky. Now once again must day be troubled; accept, O Earth, these baleful clouds, and let the sky be veiled; it is my will to spare heaven and my own deities; let not at least the star of the kindly maid behold such deeds, nor the Ledaean brethren." So spake the omnipotent Sire and turned his gaze away from the guilty fields, and the earth lacked its joyous light serene.

[136] Meanwhile the daughter of Erebus hastes on the track of Polynices through the Argolic cohorts, and finds him even at the gate, uncertain whether to avoid so many horrors by death or flight. Omens too had troubled his doubting mind: wandering by the rampart in the hours of darkness, distressed at heart and brooding in deep despair, he had seen the phantom of his wife Argia, with tresses torn and a doleful torch in her hand – a sign from heaven! ay, that was her intent, such were the torches she was to bring her spouse! – so, when he asked why she was come and what her grief, what meant these emblems of woe, she did but weep and hide the flame in silence. He knows 'twas but a mental vision of ill, for how could his spouse have come from Mycenae and draw nigh the wall, nor any know? But he is aware of Fate's admonishing and his approaching doom, and fears to be aware. But when the Fury of yawning Acheron thrice smote her lash against his corslet, he raged without restraint, and yearned not to be seated on his throne, but for crime and carnage and to expire in his slaughtered kinsman's blood, and suddenly he accosts Adrastus:

[155] "Late though it be, O father, and in our extremity, I am at length resolved, who am the last survivor of my comrades and the

folk of Argos: then had been the time, when the Achaean blood was yet unshed, to step boldly forth and venture single combat, nor expose the Danaan flower and the sacred lives of princes, that I might crown me with a glory that was the woe of mighty cities. But now since the stern hour of valour is past, now at least let me be allowed to pay what I deserve. For well thou knowest, father, though deep thou doest hide thy wounds and dost revere thy son-in-law's misery and shame: I am he, who, while thou wert ruling in peace and justice – ah! wretch that I am, would some other city had been my host! – exiled from country and throne – but exact thy punishment last: I challenge my brother – why dost thou start? I am resolved – to the death! nay, hinder me not, nor wilt thou be able. Not if my sad mother and unhappy sisters were to fling themselves between our weapons, not even if my sire were to oppose me as I rushed to battle and cast his sightless orbs upon my helm, should I give way. Shall I drink all that remains of Inachian blood, and even yet draw profit from your deaths? I saw the earth yawn and gape on my account, nor went I to the rescue; I saw Tydeus dead and caused his guilt; defenceless Tegea demands of me her prince, and his bereaved mother cries out against me in Parrhasian caves. I had not the spirit to scale Ismenos' banks while Hippomedon stained its streams with gore, nor the Tyrian towers amid the thunder and join my rage to thine, O Capaneus. Why such craven fear for my own life? But I will make due recompense. Let all the Pelasgian brides and mothers and aged sires assemble, all whom I have robbed of so many joys, and whose homes I have despoiled – I fight my brother! what more remains to do? Let them look on, and pray for Eteocles' victory. And now farewell, my wife, and farewell, sweet Mycenae! But thou, beloved sire – for mine is not all the blame for these ills, but Fate and the gods share the guilt with me – be gentle to my ashes, rescue my body after the battle and shield it from birds and from my brother, and bring home my urn, 'tis all I ask, and, for thy daughter, unite her in worthier wedlock.”

[193] They fell to weeping, as when with returning spring the Bistonian snows are warmed and mighty Haemus melts and Rhodope is all dissolved into the straitened rivers. And the aged king had begun to soothe his rage with gentle words: but the cruel Fury broke

off his speech with new terrors, and straightway, in the shape of Inachian Phereclus, brought his swift wing-footed steed and fatal arms, and with his helmet closed his ears to trusty counsels. Then "Haste!" she cried, "delay not! He too, so they say, is marching on the gates!" Thus, all scruples overcome, she seizes him and sets him upon his steed; ashen pale, he scours the open plain, and glances back to descry the looming shadow of the goddess.

[205] The Tyrian chieftain was offering in vain to Jove the sacrifice that his lightning stroke had won, thinking that the Danaans were disarmed. But neither the celestial sire nor any of the gods were at his altars, but baneful Tisiphone mingling with the affrighted attendants stands near, and to the infernal Thunderer turned aside his prayers. "Supreme of gods, to whom my Thebes owes its origin – though accursed Argos and angry Juno be jealous – since thou as a ravisher didst break up the revels on the Sidonian shore, and deign to bear on thy back a maiden of our race and to utter feigned lowings over the tranquil seas! Nor vainly do we believe that thou a second time didst enjoy Cadmean wedlock and invade the Tyrian dwellings in overpowering might: at length, at length thou dost gratefully regard thy kinsmen and the walls thou lovest, and sendest thy thunder to avenge; as though the heavenly palace had suffered assault, we saw thee rolling cloud on cloud to succour our lofty towers, and gladly we recognize thy kindly brand, and the lightnings that our sires once heard of old. Receive now our flocks and high-piled incense and our votive bull; worthy recompense is not in mortal power; let our own Bacchus and Alcides strive to repay thee, for them thou dost preserve these walls."

[226] He spoke, but he murky flame leapt forth against his face and cheeks, and seized and burnt the diadem on his locks. Then still unsmitten the angry bull beflecked the shrine with bloody foam, and dashed wildly through the opposing concourse, bearing the altar upon his frenzied horns. The ministers scatter, and the soothsayer strives to console the king. Faint-heartedly he commands the rite to be renewed and carried through, and with feigned countenance screens his anxious fears. As when the Tirynthian felt the fire enwrap his bones and the Oetaean robe cling to his limbs, he continued the offering he had begun and poured the incense, still resolute and

enduring the agony; soon beneath the stress he groaned aloud, while triumphant Nessus raged throughout his vitals.

[239] Aepytus, in excited breathless haste, comes running with news to the king, his post by the gate abandoned, and scarcely understood pants out these words to the anxious prince: "Break off thy pious worship and the untimely sacrifice, O king! Thy brother rides threatening round thy walls, and with spear and bridle assails thy hindering gates, and flinging many a challenge calls thee, thee alone to battle." Behind him his sorrowing comrades weep, each echoing the speaker with their groans, while the host clash arms and rage against the foe. The monarch prays: "Now was the time, most righteous sire of the gods! What did Capaneus deserve?" A thrill of profound hatred shook the king, yet he rejoices in mid rage: as when a chieftain-bull after the repose of his rival's exile hears with ear alert the bellow of his enemy, and knows his challenge, he stands consumed with mighty wrath before the herd, and pants forth his valour in hot foam, now fiercely tearing the ground with his hoof, now the air with his horns; the meadows quake, and the affrighted vales await the conflict.

[257] Nor are his friends less moved: "Let him batter the walls in vain!" "Can he dare so far with shattered forces?" "'Tis madness prompts the wretches to court danger, weigh no fears and detest safety." "Stay thou assured upon thy throne, we will repulse the foe, bid us make war!" So speak those near him, but lo! Creon was at hand, aflame with grief and claiming for his tongue a warrior's silence; Menoeceus galls his heart to fierceness, no peace does the father know; him he seeks and clutches, him he beholds panting the bloody stream from his breast, and ever falling from the cruel tower. And when he saw Eteocles in doubt and shrinking from the fight: "Thou shalt go," he cries, "not, villain, shall we unavenged endure thee longer, thee the brother and the prince, made powerful by thy country's tears and sufferings, guilty of Heaven's Furies and the war. Long enough have we atoned thy perjuries to the angry gods. This city, once full of arms and wealth, and thronged with citizens, hast thou like a heaven-sent pestilence or plague of earth drained to nothing, yet castest thy tall shadow o'er its emptiness? Folk are lacking to be thy slaves: some lie on earth unburnt, others their

native stream has already borne down to the sea; some seek their limbs, others tend anxious wounds. Come, restore to our wretched people their brothers, fathers, sons, restore husbands to their homes and farmsteads! Where now is mighty Hypseus, where is our neighbour Dryas, where are the arms of echoing Phocis and the Euboean chiefs? Yet them the impartial fate of war hath slain, but thou, my son – O shame! – liest the victim, ay, the victim of the throne, like some mute beast of the herd, alas! sprinkled with the first-fruits at the altar's unhallowed rite and bidden die: and doth he still waver, and now at least when summoned refuse the challenge? or does the wicked Tiresias bid another go to battle, and devise a second oracle to bring me woe? Yes, why is Haemon alone left to his unhappy sire? Command him to go, and sit thou on a lofty tower to watch the spectacle! Why dost thou rage and look round upon thy retinue? These would have thee go, ay, and pay the penalty; even thy mother and thy sisters hate thee. Thy brother hotly threatens thee with the sword and death, and rends the stern barriers of thy gates – dost thou not hearken?"

[297] Thus spoke the father, gnashing his teeth, in transports of misery and rage. The other in reply: "Thou dost not fool me, nor art thou moved by thy son's renowned death: that song of woe, those vaunts did but befit a father. But ambition lurks beneath those tears, ambition and concealed desire: thou art making his death a mask for thy mad hopes, and dost press me hard, as though succeeding to the vacant throne. Nor so utterly has Fortune left the Sidonian city that the sceptre should fall to thee, O most unworthy of so brave a son! Nor would revenge be difficult even now, but first – arms, arms, my servants! Let the brothers meet in battle. Creon would have some balm for his sorrow: take advantage of my rage; when I am victorious thou shalt pay me all." Thus for a while he put off the quarrel, and thrust back the sword that wrath put in his hand. As a serpent, struck at a venture and wounded by a shepherd, lifts up its coils erect, and from all its length of body draws the poison to its mouth: but should the foe bend his course but a little, the threats abate, the vainly swollen neck subsides, and it swallows back the venom of its own anger.

[315] But when his mother heard the first news of the calamity in

appalled dismay – nor was she slow to believe it – she went with face and tresses torn, and naked, blood-stained breast, reckless of sex and dignity: just as the mother of Pentheus climbed the heights of the frenzied mount to bring the promised head to fierce Lyaeus. Neither her maidens nor her devoted daughters can keep pace with her, such strength does despair lend to the unhappy woman, her enfeebled years grow vigorous with grief. And already the chief was fastening on him the glory of his helm, and taking his sharp javelins, and regarding his steed that rejoiced in the trumpets nor feared the bugle's blast, when on a sudden his mother appeared, mighty to behold, and he and all his company grew pale with fear, and his squire took back the spear he was proffering.

[329] “What madness is this? Whence hath returned the Evil Spirit of this realm, restored again to life? Must ye then fight each other at the last? Is it too little to have led rival hosts and given the word for slaughter? And afterwards, what home awaits the victor? these arms of mine? O my dread spouse, blest hereafter in thy blindness! now pay ye the penalty, my guilty eyes! Must I then see this day? Whither, ruthless one, turnest thou thy threatening gaze? Why do flush and pallor alternate on thy countenance, and thy clenched teeth stifle angry mutterings? Ah, woe is me! thou wilt prevail! Yet first must thou test thy arms at home: I will stand in the threshold of the gate, a baneful omen and dread image of calamity. These hoary locks, these breasts must needs be trampled by thee, accursed one, and o’er thy mother’s womb this steed be driven. Ah! spare! why dost thou repel me from thy path with shield and sword? No solemn curses have I uttered against thee to the Stygian gods, nor invoked the Furies with sightless prayer. Hear me in my distress! ’tis thy mother, not thy sire entreats thee, cruel one! Stay thy guilt, and take the measure of such madness. But thy brother – dost thou say? – beats at the walls, and raises impious war against thee. Ay, for no mother, no sister doth prevent him; but thee all beseech, here all make lament. Yonder scarce Adrastus alone dissuades from battle, or perchance doth urge it; wilt thou leave thy ancestral gate and the gods, and from my very embrace go forth against thy brother?”

[354] But in another region Antigone glides silently by stealth through all the tumult – nor does maidenly chastity delay her – and

hastes in eagerness to climb to the summit of the Ogygian wall; old Actor follows close behind, though his strength avails not to reach the tower's height. Awhile she hesitated at the sight of the host afar, then recognized him, alas! as with proud taunt and javelin he assailed the city; first her wailings fill the air, then, as though about to leap down from the wall, she cries: "Put up thy weapons and look but a moment at this tower, my brother, and turn thy bristling crest to face my eyes! Is it enemies thou findest? Is it thus we demand good faith and yearly pact? Is this an innocent exile's just complaint and righteous cause? By thy Argive home, O brother – for thy Tyrian home thou slightest – by any joy thou hast therein, be softened: lo! both the armies, either folk entreat thee! Antigone, faithful to her kinsmen's sufferings and suspected by the king, and sister but to thee, hard-hearted one, entreats thee! Remit at least thy frowning looks; let me perchance for the last time behold the face I love, and see whether thou dost weep at my lament. Him even now doth our mother urge with suppliant tears, and doth put back, they say, his naked blade: art thou still stubborn to me, to me who night and day weep for thy wandering exile, and have oftimes appeased thy father's wrath even as it rose against thee? Why dost thou free thy brother of guilt? Verily he broke faith and his sworn word, guilty is he and cruel to his own; yet lo! he comes not to thy challenge."

[382] At these words his rage began somewhat to grow faint though the Fury upbraided and resisted; already he has relaxed his arm, now he wheels his horse less sharply, now he falls silent; groans burst from him, his casque confesses tears, his ire is blunted, and he feels shame both to depart and to have come in guilt: when suddenly the Fiend, thrusting his mother aside, shatters the gate and hurls forth Eteocles crying: "I come, and only grudge thee thou wert the first to challenge; chide not my delay, my mother hung upon my arms and stayed me; what ho! my country, land of thy monarchs most unsure, now assuredly thou shalt be the victor's!" The other in no milder strain: "At last, ruffian, dost thou keep faith, and come down into fair field? O once again after many a day my brother, engage! no law, no treaty but this remains." So spoke he, scowling at his kinsman in hostile mood; for in his heart he chafes at the other's numerous train, and his royal helm and the purple trappings of his charger, and his

buckler's glancing gold – though he himself was not meanly armed, and his cloak shone with no common lustre: Argia herself had wrought it in Maeonian fashion, and with skilled finger had woven strands of gold in the purple web.

[403] And now at the Furies' impulse, they dash forward to the dusty plain, each goaded and inspired by his companion. These guide the reins themselves, and arrange the trappings and the shining arms, and entwine their snakes amid the horses' manes. Set there upon the field is the crime of kindred blood, the dread conflict of one womb, beneath their helms the faces of brothers meet in battle. The banners quake, the trumpets are silent, and the Martian horns are struck dumb; thrice from the regions of gloom thundered their impatient monarch and shook the depths of earth, and even the deities of battle fled; renowned Virtue was nowhere seen, Bellona put out her torches, Mars drove afar his affrighted chariot, and the Maid shrank away with her fierce Gorgon-head, and into their places came the Stygian sisters. The wretched common folk stand high upon the house-tops, no place but is wet with tears, no tower but sounds with lamentations. Here old men complain that they have lived so long, there mothers stand with bosoms bare, and forbid their little ones to view the fray. The king of Tartarus himself orders the gates to be set open, and the Ogygian ghosts to attend their kindred's monstrous deeds. Seated upon their native hills they pollute the day with grisly band, and rejoice that their own crimes should be surpassed.

[424] When Adrastus heard that the princes were rushing to the perilous fight with open taunts, and that shame could no longer hinder the ghastly deed, he hastens to the spot and himself drove between them, himself full-reverend both in monarchy and years. But what could a stranger's influence avail with those who recked not even of their loved ones? Yet he entreats: "Shall we then behold this horror, sons of Inachus and Tyre? In the name of justice and the gods, in the name of war – persist not in your fury! Thee, foeman, I beseech – although, did thy rage suffer thee, thou too art not far from me in blood – thee, son-in-law, I command as well; if thy lust of power is so great, I put off this royal robe, go take Lerna and Argos for thyself alone!" But his persuasion no more abates their kindled rage, or checks their once-determined purpose, than did the Scythian

Pontus ever stay the Cyanean rocks from clashing, though it rose high with arching waves. When he sees his prayers are fruitless, and the teams galloping in twofold dust to battle, and the frenzied princes feeling their hold on the javelin-strap, he flees away leaving all, camp, army, son-in-law and Thebes, and drives Arion forward, though he turn him in the yoke and give fateful warning: even as the warden of the shades and the third heir of the world, after the lot's unkind apportioning, leapt down from his chariot and grew pale, for he was come to Tartarus and heaven was lost for ever.

[447] Yet would not Fortune suffer the fray, but halted at the opening of the crime, and delayed awhile. Twice were their onslaughts wasted, twice did a kindly mischance divert their charging steeds, and their flung darts fell aside pure of unnatural blood. They strain at the reins, with savage goads they incite their innocent teams; then too an awful prodigy of heaven stirs the armies, and from this side and that roll murmurs through the muttering hosts; often do they burn to renew the fight, to dash forward and to set their whole array in the wretches' path.

[457] Long time, offended alike by earth and the company of the gods, had Piety been sitting in a remote region of the heavens, with unwonted dress and troubled countenance, and fillets stripped from her hair: she bewailed the fraternal strife, as though a hapless sister or anxious mother of the fighters, and loudly chiding cruel Jove and the guilty Fates protested she would leave heaven and the light of day, and descend to Erebus, for already she preferred the abodes of Styx. "Why, sovereign Nature, didst thou create me to oppose the passions of living folk and often the gods? Nought am I any more among men, nowhere ma I revered. Ah! what fury! alas! mankind, alas! dread Promethean skill! How blessed was the vacancy of earth and sea after Pyrrha's time! Behold the race of mortals!" She spoke, and watching an occasion for her aid: "Let me but try," she cried, "though my attempt be fruitless." Down from the pole she leapt, and beneath the darkened clouds a snow-white track followed the footsteps of the goddess, sad though she was. Scarce had she set foot upon the plain, when a sudden peace stilled the fury of the warriors, and they were conscious of their crime; then tears bedewed faces and breasts, and a silent horror stole upon the

brethren. Clad in feigned armour also and many dress she cries now to these, now to those: "Forward! be moving! Withstand them! Ye who have sons at home or brothers, or pledges held so dear. Even here – is it not plain, the gods unasked are pitiful? – weapons are falling, steeds wavering, and Chance herself resists."

[482] She had somewhat stirred the doubting lines, had not grim Tisiphone marked her deceit, and swifter than the fire from heaven darted to her side, reproaching her: "Why hinderest thou the bold deeds of war, O sluggard, peace-devoted deity? Hence, shameless one! this battle-field, this day is mine; too late now defendest thou guilty Thebes. Where wert thou then when Bacchus made war and the orgies drove the matrons to arms and madness? Where wert thou idling, while the snake of Mars drank the unhallowed flood, while Cadmus ploughed, while the Sphinx fell defeated, while Oedipus was questioned by his sire, while by my torch's light Jocasta was entering the marriage-chamber?" So she upbraids, and threatens her with hissing hydras and brandished torch, as she shrinks from her gaze and far withdraws her shamefast face; down over her eyes the goddess draws her mantle and flees to lay her complaint before the mighty Thunderer.

[497] Then verily are they kindled to yet more fiery wrath; battle pleases, and he armies, changed once more, are willing to look on. They begin anew the savage work: the impious monarch aims his dart, and first dares the fortune of the deadly spear; but striving to find a way through the middle of the shield it strikes not home, but is fabled by the solid gold. Then the exile advances, and utters loud a deadly prayer: "Ye gods, whom blinded Oedipus besought not vainly to blow the blaze of crime, I make no wrongful plea; with this same steel will I atone my deed and rend my breast, so that my rival die and leave me with the sceptre in my grasp, and, my vassal in the shades, take that sorrow with him to the tomb." The swift javelin flies between horseman's thigh and horse's flank, willing death for both, but the blow was foiled by the rider's bent knee, yet the spear-point baffled of its vow found a wound slantwise in the horse's ribs. Scorning the tightened rein the steed darts headlong away, and traces a bloody curve along the reddened field. The other exults, thinking it his brother's gore, and so thinks he himself in fear; and now the exile

shakes free all his rein, and dashes in blind, impetuous onslaught against the wounded charger. Arms, bridles, weapons are all mingled in confusion, both horses lose their footing and are thrown to earth. Even as at night two ships that the cloudy South wind has locked together break oars, entangle ropes, and, struggling with each other and the storm through the long darkness, sink even as they are together to the depths: such was the appearance of the fight.

[524] Without skill or fashion, only in wrath and fury they engage, and see through their helms the flames of hate, and search with fiery glance each other's countenance: no interval of ground divides them, swords are entangled, arms interlocked, and they catch the sound of each other's cries like bugle or trumpet-call. As when rage has set lightning-swift boars rushing headlong to the fight, and raised the bristles erect upon their backs, fire quivers in their eyes, and the curved tusks of crescent shape ring loud; from a neighbouring height the anxious hunter watches the fray, and bids his hounds be silent: so bloodthirstily do they attack, nor yet do they deal mortal wounds, but the blood flows, the crime is accomplished. No more need is there of Furies: they only marvel and praise as they watch, and grieve that human rage exceeds their own. Each in furious lust seeks his brother's life-blood, nor knows his own is flowing; at last the exile rushes in, and calling on his right arm, whose ire is more valiant and which has the greater justice in his crime, drove his sword deep into his kinsman's body, where the corslet's lowest rim now gives with feathers but ill protection to the groin. The other, not yet in pain, but frightened by the first cold of the steel, withdraws his shaken limbs behind his buckler, but soon more and more conscious of the wound he gasps and labours; nor does his foe spare him as he gives way, but taunts him: "Whither art thou retreating, brother? Behold the somnolent languor, the exhausted sleep of kings! See there long years of sheltered rule! But here thou seest limbs hardened by want and exile! Learn to be schooled in arms, nor trust to fortune!"

[552] So fight the hapless ones; life yet remained, though feeble, in the wicked king, and his last drops of blood, and awhile he could have stayed upright but purposely he falls, and even in the moment of death devises his last fraud. Cithaeron is startled by a shout, and his brother thinking he has conquered raises his hands to heaven:

“’Tis well, my vow is heard; his eyes are heavy, and his face swims in death. Come, somebody, quick, away with the sceptre and the ornament of his locks, while he yet sees!” So speaking he drew nigh, and would fain also take his arms, as though to bear them to grace the shrines of his victorious land; but the other’s life was not yet spent, and he retained still breath enough to wreak his avenging wrath; and when he knew that he was standing over him and stooping to his body, he raises his weapon unperceived and calling up his hatred to strengthen the weak remnants of his failing life, now glad to die, he left the sword in his brother’s heart. But he: “Livest thou still, and doth thy malice yet survive, thou treacherous one, who wilt never merit an abode of peace? This way with me to the shades! There too will I demand my rights, if but the Gnosian urn of the Agenorian judge still stands, whereby kings may be punished.” No more he spake, but fell, and crushed his brother beneath all his armed weight.

[574] Go, savage souls, and pollute baleful Tartarus by your death, and exhaust all the punishments of Erebeus! And O ye Stygian goddesses, spare now the afflictions of mankind; in every land and throughout all ages let one day only have seen so dread a crime; let posterity forget the infamous horror, and kings alone recount that combat.

[580] But the sire, when he knew the horrid deed was over, burst out from his gloom profound, and in the dread gateway displays his living corpse; his grey hair and beard are filthy and matted with ancient gore, and locks congealed with blood veil his fury-haunted head; deep-sunken are his cheeks and eyes, and foul the traces of the sight’s uprooting. The maid sustains his left arm that leans its weight upon her; his right is supported by a staff. ’Tis even as though the furrower of sluggish Avernus through loathing of the shades should leave his bark and come up to the world above and affright the sun and the pale stars, though himself unable long to endure the air of heaven; meanwhile the long tale grows as the ferryman dallies, and all along the banks the ages await him: in such wise does he come forth upon the plain, and to his comrade ‘mid her utter woe: “Lead me,” he cries, “to my sons, I pray, and set their father on the new-slain corpses.” The maiden hesitates, not knowing what he purposes;

arms, men and chariots block their way, and entangle and delay them, and the old man's steps falter in the high-piled carnage, and his hapless guide hath sore ado. But when the virgin's shriek betrayed the long-sought bodies, he flung his full length on the cold limbs. No word the old man spake: he lies and moans upon their bloody wounds, nor do the long-attempted words follow. At length while he gropes and searches for the faces hidden within their helms the father found utterance for his long-silent grief:

[605] "Late after so long time art thou come, affection, to sway my heart? Doth mercy dwell in this human breast? Ah! thou hast conquered, Nature, conquered this unhappy father! Behold, I weep, and my tears steal over these dry wounds, this sinful hand follows with womanly beating of my breast. Receive these fitting obsequies of your unhallowed deaths, O cruel ones, too truly mine! I cannot recognize my sons, nor suit my words – tell me, daughter, I beg, which am I holding? With what honours now can one so cruel as I perform your rites? Oh, if my eyes could be restored for me to rend them! Oh, if I could wreak my rage upon my countenance as once I did! Ah, woe! alas, for a parent's prayers and curses granted too faithfully! What god was it stood by when I prayed, and caught my words and told them to the Fates? 'Twas madness caused those ills, and the Fury, and my father and my mother and my kingdom and my falling eyes – not I! By Dis I swear it, and by the darkness that I loved and this my innocent guide, so may I go to Tartarus by a worthy death, and Laius' shade not angrily shun my presence! Woe is me, what brotherly embraces are these, what are these wounds I feel? Loose your hands, I entreat, and relax at last these deadly bonds, now at least let your sire come between you." Amid such laments he little by little had become in mood for death, and secretly, lest his daughter should prevent him, sought a weapon; but prudent Antigone had withdrawn their swords from his reach. Then the old man in wrath: "Where are the weapons of death? Alas! ye Furies! has the blade sunk all its length into their bodies?" His feeble comrade lifts him as he speaks, and hides her own mute sorrow, rejoicing that grief has touched her savage sire.

[634] But the queen, terrified by the shout that marked the fight begun, had then brought forth from her chamber the famous sword,

the sword that was the lamentable spoil of sceptred Laius. And with much complaining of the gods above and her dire couch and her son's madness and the shade of her first lord she strove with her right hand, yet scarce at length as she leaned forward did the steel make entrance to her breast; the wound rent her aged veins, and the ill-fated couch is purged in blood. As the blade grated upon her skinny bosom Ismene fell upon her and weeping stanch'd the wound with her hair and tears: as when in the Marathonian glade sorrowful Erigone wept her fill for her slain sire, and already was untying the fatal girdle, and bent on death was fastening it to the sturdy boughs.

[648] And now, rejoicing to have foiled the hopes of both princes, Fortune with spiteful hand had transferred elsewhere the sceptre of Amphion's realm, and Creon held the power of Cadmus. Ah, miserable end of war! for him had the brothers fought. Him does the seed of Mars proclaim, and Menoeceus lately offered to save the state endears him to the people. He climbs the throne of distressful Aonia, that brings death to tyrants: ah, flattering power! ill-counselling ambition! Will new rulers ne'er take heed by the examples of the old? Lo! he delights to stand in the accursed spot, and exert a bloody sway. What availest thou, kindlier Fortune? Already he begins to blunt the feelings of a sire, and once upon the throne to wipe Menoeceus from his heart. First, imbued with the savage customs of the palace, as proof and sample of his rule, he bids the Danaans be debarred from funeral fire, and the unhappy host he left under the bare vault, and their sad shades without a resting-place. Next, meeting the returning Oedipus in the entrance of the Ogygian gate, he quailed for a moment, and owned his lesser rank in silence, and checked his ready ire; but soon he resumes the king, and more boldly chiding his blind foe: "Avaunt," he cried, "hateful omen to the conquerors, keep far hence thy Furies, and purify the Theban walls by thy departure! Fulfilled is thy long-endured hope: go, for thy sons lie dead; what wishes has thou left?"

[673] A thrill of frenzy shook him, his squalid cheeks stood quivering as though he saw, and his old age fell from him. Then thrusting away his daughter and his staff, sustained by wrath alone, he utters a cry in the indignation of his heart: "Hast thou already time to be cruel, Creon? Camest thou but lately by treachery to my throne

and place of rank, miserable wretch, and art so soon permitted to trample on the ruin of kings? Already dost thou debar the conquered from burial, our kinsmen from their city? Well done! thou canst worthily defend the sceptre of Thebes! This is thy first day of power, but why dost thou foolishly restrict thy new authority? Why grudgingly measure out so great an office? Thou threatenest exile: that is but timorous harshness in a monarch! Why dost thou not forthwith imbue thy greedy blade? Thou hast the power, believe me! some minion would come eager to obey, and fearlessly sever my unresisting neck. Begin then! or dost thou expect me to fall prostrate and with suppliant hand grope for my stern master's feet? But did I try, wouldst thou allow me? Canst thou threaten me with any punishments, or think that any terrors yet remain for me? Dost thou bid me leave the palace? Heaven and earth I have left of my own will, and uncompelled turned my fierce avenging hand on my own eyes: what canst thou command to equal that, malicious monarch? I take my flight, and leave an unhallowed land; what matters it whither I convey my blindness and my lingering death? Do I fear lest any people refuse to grant my prayer for as much of their soil as my miserable corpse will cover? But Thebes is sweet: ay, verily, here my birth is more renowned, here kindlier stars delight my vision, here are my mother and my sons! Nay, keep thou Thebes and rule it, with Cadmus' fortune and Laius' and mine; in such wise marry, and beget loyal sons! and lack the courage to escape by thy own hand the blows of Fortune, but when thou art in the toils, then hold life dear. There, 'tis enough of blessings! come, daughter, lead me far away; yet why do I make thee share my sorrows? Give me a guide, great sovereign!"

[708] Hapless Antigone fears to be left behind, and pleads in different wise: "By thy heaven-blest throne, revered Creon, and Menoeceus' sacred shade, pardon him in his affliction, forgive his proud words. Long grievance hath given him this style of speech; nor is he thus harsh to thee alone, even so addresses he the gods and Fate; his distress hath hardened him, even to me he is often discourteous; in his untameable heart there long hath dwelt a stifled freedom and a savage longing for pitiless death. And now behold in his cunning he rouses up thy anger and desires thee to punish him;

but do thou, I pray, enjoy the greater blessings of thy realm, and in thy lofty state o'erlook the fallen, and have reverence for the mighty ruins of former kings. He too was once lifted high upon a throne and hedged with arms, and, impartial alike to great and humble, gave succour and justice to the wretched – who now has but one companion maid out of all his armies; not yet did he know exile. Can he oppose happiness? Dost thou proceed against him with hated and thy kingdom's might? Dost thou drive him from thy house? Is it lest the groan too loudly at thy gate and meet thee with importunate prayers? Fear not that: far removed from thy hall will he lament; I will subdue his proud spirit and teach him submission, I will take him from the gatherings of men and hide him in a place of solitude. An outlaw will he be; for e'en should he wander, what foreign walls will open to him? Wouldst thou have him go to Argos and crawl a beggar into hostile Mycenae, or tell of the slaughter of the Aonians at the gate of conquered Adrastus, and entreat some scrap of succour for a Theban king? Doth it please thee that he should recount the crimes of our unhappy race, and show forth all his shameful plight? Conceal us, I pray, whate'er we are – no lengthy boon, O Creon: pity his old age, and grant me here, ay, here, I beg, to lay to rest my sire's unhappy spirit. Surely Thebans may have burial!"

[739] So prays she, prostrate on the ground; her father leads her away, with angry words and scorning pardon. Even as a lion, whom once in his youth the woods and mountains trembled at, now lies sluggish beneath a lofty rock and disarmed by length of years: yet even in age is he terrible of aspect and not to be approached, and should the noise of lowing come to his languid ears, he springs up and remembers himself, and groans that his strength is broken, and that other lions lord it upon the plains.

[748] The monarch is moved by her plea, yet grants not everything to the suppliant's tears, but cuts short a part of his bounty. "Thou shalt not," he cries, "be kept far from the boundaries of thy land, so be it thou defile not with thy presence its sacred shrines and homes. Let the wilds of thy Cithaeron hold thee; and lo! this land is a fit dwelling for thy darkness, where the fight was fought and two races lie in blood." So he speaks, and in haughty pride, amid the feigned applauding of his train and the weeping folk, sought the palace gate.

[757] Meanwhile the routed Pelasgians steal away from their fatal camp; none has his own ensigns or chief to follow; silently in scattered rout they go, and instead of a glorious death they cherish dishonoured life and a shameful home-coming. Night favours the fugitives and shrouds them in welcome gloom.

BOOK 12

[1] Not yet had the wakeful dawn put all the stars to flight from heaven, and the moon was beholding the approach of day with facing horn, what time Tithonia scatters the clouds in hurrying rout, and prepares the wide firmament for the return of Phoebus: already Dircean bands stray forth from their scanty dwellings, complaining of the tardy night; although not till then had they rested, or gained their first sleep after battle, yet a troubled peace forbids repose, and victory still remembers the horrors of war. Scarce at first dare they to step forth and destroy the rampart works, scarce wholly to unbar the gates; the old fears rise before them, and the dread of the deserted plain: just as to men long tossed on ocean earth heaves at first, so are they spellbound and amazed that nought assails them, and fancy that the slain hosts rise up again. So when Idalian birds have seen a tawny snake climbing the threshold of a conspicuous tower, they drive their little ones within and wall the nestling brood behind their talons, and stir their unwarlike wings to battle; and though he soon retreat, yet the white flock fears the empty air, and when at last they venture flight they thrill with terror and still look back from the mid-vault of heaven.

[22] Forth they go to the bloodless multitude and the remnants of the fallen host, wherever grief and indignation, blood-stained guides, impel them; some behold the weapons, some the bodies, others but the faces of the slain, with strangers' limbs near by; some mourn their chariots, and address – all they can do – the widowed steeds; others imprint kisses on gaping wounds, and bewail the valour of the dead. They sort out the cold heaps of slain: severed hands appear with lances and sword-hilts in their grip, and arrows fixed in eyes; many find no traces of their dead, and rush about, with grief ever ready and on the verge. But around the unsightly corpses a pitiable strife arises, who shall perform the rites and make their funeral. Often too were they deceived – Fortune mocking them awhile – and wept for foemen; nor was it easy to tell what carnage to avoid and what to trample. But those whose homes have suffered not, and who are spared all anguish, either stray around the deserted tents of the

Danaans and set them afire, or – so far as they can after battle – search where lies the dust-bespattered Tydeus, whether the chasm of the ravished augur still be gaping, where is the enemy of the gods, and whether the heavenly embers still glow among his limbs. Already the daylight faded upon their tears, nor did late Vesper drive them away; in their misery they love their lamentation and feast upon their sorrow. Nor return they to their homes, but sit all night about the corpses, and bewailing them by turns ward off the beasts by fires and sounds of woe; nor did their eyes close yielding to the sweet influence of the stars, nor through constant weeping. For the third time Aurora strove with the Morning Star, and already the mountains are despoiled, and mighty trunks of Teumesus, the glory of the groves, and the timber of Cithaeron, friend of the funeral pyre, is come; on high-wrought piles blaze the bodies of the ruined race: the Ogygian ghosts rejoice at the last tribute; but the unburied troop of Greeks raise pitiable lament, and moaning flit about the forbidden fires. Nor does the cruel spirit of fierce Eteocles receive the honours of a prince; his brother by command is held an Argive still, and his outlawed shade is driven away.

[60] But Menoeceus is not suffered by Thebes or the king his father to burn upon a vulgar pyre, no heap of logs forms a common, customary mound, but a warlike pile of chariots and shields and all the weapons of the Greeks is raised; on the massed trophies of the foe he himself like a conqueror is laid, his locks adorned with peace-bringing laurel and woollen fillets: just as when the Tirynthian, summoned by the stars, laid him down with joy on kindled Oeta. Thereon did his sire sacrifice yet living victims, Pelasgian captives and bridled steeds, a solace to his warlike valour; upon them the towering flames quiver, and at last his father's groans burst forth: "Ah! had not overmastering desire of noble praise possessed thee, my son, thou hadst been revered alike with me, ay, even ruled Echion's city, but now thou embitterest my coming joys and the ungrateful burden of a realm. Though thy unfailing virtue dwell in heaven amid the companies of the gods – as I verily believe – yet, I shall ever mourn thee, deity as thou art: let Thebes build altars and dedicate lofty fanes; suffer thy sire alone to lament thee. And now, alas, what worthy rites, what funeral pomp can I lavish on thy tomb?"

I could not, even had I power to mingle baneful Argos and stricken Mycenae with thy ashes, and fling myself upon them, who have gained life – ah! horror! – and royal state by the blood of my son! Hath one day, one same unhallowed war sent thee, boy, and those dread brothers to Tartarus together? Are Oedipus now and I in equal plight of sorrow? Like indeed are the shades we mourn O righteous Jove! Receive, my son, new offerings to grace thy triumph, receive this ruling sceptre of my right hand and this haughty crown that binds my brow, thy gifts unto thy sire – small joy indeed to him! As king, ay, king let the sullen shade of Eteocles behold thee!”

[92] So speaking he strips head and hand, and with wrath inflamed continues in more violent strain: “Come then, let them call me fierce and heartless, if I forbid the Lernaean dead to burn with thee; would I could put lingering life within their bodies and drive their guilty souls from heaven and Erebus, and myself, ay myself go search for wild beasts and birds with hooked mouths, and show them the accursed limbs of the princes! Woe is me, that the kindly earth and the lapse of time will resolve them where they lie! Wherefore again and again I repeat my stern decree: let none venture to give the aid of final fire to the Pelasgians, or he will atone his deed by death, and fill up the tale of corpses: by the gods above and by great Menoeceus I sear it!” He spoke, and his companions dragged him away and bore him to the palace.

[105] Meanwhile a sorrowful band of Inachian women, widowed and bereaved – drawn, hapless ones, by the sad tidings – were hastening, like a captive throng, from desolate Argos; each had her own wounds, all were in similar plight, with hair hanging down upon their bosoms and high-girt raiment; their faces torn by their cruel nails were streaming, their tender arms were swollen with beating. First of her stricken sisters, helpless Argia, queen of the sable-clad company, seeks her path, sinking upon her sorrowing maidens and anon struggling to her feet; no thought has she of her sire or royal home; one devotion fills her heart, one name, that of her beloved Polynices, is on her lips; she would fain forget Mycenae and make Dirce and Cadmus’ ill-starred city her abode. Next Deipyle, as eager as her sister, brings Calydonian women mingling with the train of Leran to Tydeus’ obsequies; she had heard, unhappy one! of her

husband's crime and impious gnawing, but love in affliction forgives the slain one all. After her Nealce, wild of aspect, yet rousing tearful compassion, bewails Hippomedon with the grief that is his due. Then comes the seer's unrighteous spouse, doomed alas! to build an empty pyre. The bereft comrade of Maenalian Diana leads the rearmost companies of the mourners, and Evadne, bitter at heart: the one in querulous sorrow for the exploits of her daring boy, the other mindful of her mighty lord goes fiercely weeping and in wrath against high heaven. Hecate beheld them from her Lycean groves and bore them tearful company, and as they approached the double shore the Theban mother lamented from her Isthmian tomb; the Eleusinian, though sorrowing for herself, wept for the night-wandering multitude, and showed her mystic fires to guide their errant course. The Saturnian herself leads their going, lest her own folk should meet them and forbid them passage, and the glory of their great enterprise be lost. Moreover, Iris is bidden cherish the dead bodies of the princes, and laves their decaying limbs with mysterious dew and ambrosial juices, that they may resist the longer and await the pyre, nor perish before the flames have seized them.

[141] Lo! Ornytus, haggard of face and pale from a gaping wound – he had lost his friends and was hampered by a recent blow – feebly picks his way in timid stealth through pathless deserts, leaning upon a broken spear. When in amaze he beheld the solitudes stirred by strange tumult and the train of women, all that he sees surviving of the host of Lerna, he inquires not of their journey or its cause – 'tis clear enough – but in mournful accents thus accosts them: “Whither, hapless ones, whither are ye journeying? Do ye hope for funeral fires for your dead heroes? A sentinel of the slain stands there unsleeping, and keeps count of the unburied corpses for the king. Tears are there nowhere, all men that venture nigh are driven far away; only beasts and birds are suffered to approach. Will the just Creon pay respect to your grief? Sooner may one prevail upon the merciless altars of Busiris or the ravening Odrysian stall or the Sicilian deities; perchance he will carry off the suppliants, if I know his mind, nor will he slay you upon the bodies of your lords, but far from the spirits ye love. Nay, flee, while your road is safe, return to Lerna and carve – this ye yet can do – the names of your lost ones on empty

sepulchres, and call the absent ghosts to untenanted tombs. Or implore Cecropian succour – they say that Theseus draws nigh, returning in triumph from victory on Thermodon’s banks. By force of arms alone will Creon learn humanity.” So he spoke, but they were horrified amid their tears, and their great zest of going was struck with dismay, and all their faces were frozen in one pallor. Even so when the hungry roar of a Hyrcanian tigress comes wafted on the wind to gentle heifers, at the sound terror seizes the countryside, and all are filled with mighty fear, which shall please her, whose shoulders shall feel the ravening beast upon them.

[173] Straightway opinion is divided by many a discordant impulse: some wish to supplicate Thebes and haughty Creon, others to see if the clemency of the Attic folk will grant them aught; return seems cowardly and is last in their thoughts. Hereupon Argia conceives a sudden passion for more than womanly valour, and neglecting her sex designs a mighty emprise: she purposes – cruel expectation of unequalled peril! – to come to grips with the law of the impious realm, whither no maid of Rhodope, no child of snowy Phasis ringed round by virgin cohorts would go. Then she devises a cunning ruse whereby to separate herself from her faithful train, and in contempt of her life and in the rashness of overpowering grief to challenge the merciless gods and the cruel king; devotion and chaste passion urge her on. He himself too appears before her eyes, manifest in every act, now as her guest, unhappy girl! now pledging his hand at the first holy rites, now her kindly spouse, and now grimly helmed and mournful in her embrace and oft looking back from the outer threshold of the gate: but no image more frequently haunts her mind than that which comes, stripped of its armour, from the blood of the Aonian battle-field and cries for burial. Her soul fretted with such frenzy she sickens and with purest passion woos the grave; then, turning to her Pelasgian comrades, “Do you,” she says, “call forth the Attic hosts and Marathonian arms, and may Fortune favour your devoted toil: suffer me to penetrate the Ogygian abodes, who was the sole cause of ruin, and endure the first terrors of the monarch; nor shall I beat at the city’s doors in vain; the parents and the sisters of my lord are there: not as a stranger shall I enter Thebes. Only call me not back: my keen desire urges me thither, and gives me good omen.”

[204] Without more words she selects Menoetes alone – once the guardian and counsellor of her maiden modesty – and though without experience of knowledge of the country, hurries on with headlong speed by the way that Ornytus had come. And when she seemed to have left afar the comrades of her woes, “Could I wait,” she cried, “for the pleasure of tardy Theseus, while thou – ah, sorrow! – art mouldering on the enemy’s fields? Would his chieftains, would his cunning soothsayer assent to war? Meanwhile thy body doth decay. Rather than that shall I not give my own limbs for the taloned birds to tear? Even now, if thou hast any feeling in the world of shades, thou art complaining, faithful spouse, to the deities of Styx that I am hard-hearted, that I am slow in coming. Alas! if thou still art bare, alas! if perchance already buried: mine is the crime in either case; hath sorrow then no power? Is death, or fierce Creon, all a dream? Ornytus, thou dost cheer me on my way!” So speaking, she hastens with rapid pace over the fields of Megara; folk that she meets point out her path. Awe-struck at her miserable plight. With grim countenance she strides onward, terrified by no sound without a panic within, with all the confidence of utter despair, and rather feared than fearing: as when upon a night in Phrygia Dindymus resounds with wailing, and the crazy leader of the women’s revel speeds to the waters of pine-rearing Simois – she to whom the goddess herself gave the knife, selecting her for bloodshed, and marked her with the wool-bound wreath.

[228] Already had father Titan hidden his flaming chariot in the Hesperian flood, to emerge again from other waves, yet she, her weary toil beguiled by grief, knows not that the day is ended; nor does the gathering gloom of the fields affray her, but unchecked she fares o’er pathless rocks, past boughs that threaten to fall, through mysterious forests, pitch-dark even in cloudless day, over ploughlands scarred with hidden dykes, plunging heedless through rivers, past sleeping beasts and dangerous lairs of fearful monsters. So great is the strength of passion and of grief! Menoetes is ashamed of his slower pace, and marvels at the gait of his frail ward. What abodes of beasts or men echoed not to her grievous plaint? How often did she lose the track as she went, how often did the solace of the companion flame desert her straying steps, and the cold darkness swallow up the

torchlight? And now the slopes of Pentheus' ridge lie beside their weary path, and broaden into plain, when Menoetes nigh failing and with panting breast thus begins to speak: "Not far away, Argia, if the hope inspired by the toils we have endured deceive not, lie, methinks, the Ogygian dwellings and the bodies that lack sepulture; from close at hand come waves of heavily-tainted air, and mighty birds are returning through the void. 'Tis indeed that cruel battle-field, nor is the city far distant. Seest thou how the plain outstretches the vast shadow of the walls, and how the dying fires flicker from the watch-towers? The city is hard by; night herself was more silent but a moment past, and only the stars broke through the pitchy gloom."

[255] Argia shuddered, and stretched out her right hand toward the walls: "O city of Thebes, once longed-for, but now the dwelling of our foes, yet, if thou givest back my dead spouse uninjured, even so a soil beloved: seest thou in what garb arrayed, by what a train accompanied, I, the daughter-in-law of mighty Oedipus, for the first time approach thy gates? No unhallowed wish have I; a stranger, I beg but for a pyre, a corpse, and leave to mourn. Him restore to me, I pray, who was exiled from his realm and conquered in the fight, him, whom thou deemedst not worthy of his father's throne! And come thou too, I beg, if spirits have any shape, and souls can wander freed from their bodies, show me the way, and lead me thyself to thy own corpse, if I have so deserved!" She spoke, and entering the pastoral shelter of a neighbouring cottage kindles anew the breath of the dying brand, and impetuously rushes forth upon the awful plain. Even so did the bereaved Ceres light her torch and from Aetna's rocks cast the shifting glare of the mighty flame here over Sicily, there over Ausonia, as she followed the traces of the dark ravisher and the great wheel-furrows in the dust; Enceladus himself re-echoes her wild wailings, and illumines her path with bursting fire; "Persephone" cry woods and rivers, seas and clouds: only the palace of her Stygian lord calls not "Persephone."

[278] Her faithful supporter warns the distracted dame to remember Creon and keep low her torch in stealthy hiding. She who of late was feared as queen throughout Argive cities, the ambitious hope of suitors and sacred promise of her race, through all the terrors of the night, without a guide and in the presence of the foe, goes on alone,

o'er obstacles of arms, o'er grass all slippery with gore, trembling not at the gloom nor at troops of spirits hovering around or ghosts bewailing their own limbs, oft treading blindly but unheeding on swords and weapons; she labours but to avoid the fallen, and thinks every corpse the one she seeks, while with keen glance she searches the slain, and bending down turns bodies on their backs, and complains to the stars that they give not light enough.

[291] By chance Juno, stealing herself from the bosom of her mighty lord, was faring through the slumberous darkness of the sky to Theseus' walls, that she might move Pallas to yield and Athens to give gracious welcome to the pious suppliants; and when from the height of heaven she beheld the innocent Argia exhausted by fruitless wandering o'er the plain, she was grieved at the sight, and encountering the lunar team she faced them and spoke thus with calm accents: "Grant me a little boon, O Cynthia, if Juno can command respect; 'tis true that Jove's bidding, thou shameless one, that threefold night when Hercules – but I will let old quarrels be; now canst thou do me a service. Argia, daughter of Inachus, my favourite votary – seest thou in what a night she roams, nor with failing strength can find her spouse in the thick darkness? Thy beams too are faint with shrouding vapour; show forth thy horns, I pray thee, and let thy orbit approach the earth nearer than is thy wont. This Sleep, too, who leaning forward plies for thee thy humid chariot-reins, send him upon the Aonian watchmen." Scarce had she spoken, when the goddess cleft the clouds and displayed her mighty orb; the shadows started in terror, and the stars were shorn of their radiance; scarce did Saturnia herself endure the brightness.

[312] First by the light that floods the plain she recognizes her husband's cloak, her own handiwork, poor woman! though the texture is hidden and the purple mourns to be suffused with blood; and while she calls upon the gods, and thinks that this is all that is left of the beloved corpse, she catches sight of himself, nigh trampled into the dust. Her spirit quailed, and vision and speech fled, and grief thrust back her tears; then she falls prostrate about his face, and seeks with kisses for his departed soul, and pressing the blood from his hair and raiment gathers it up to treasure. At last as her voice returns: "My husband, is it he who once marched captain of the war to the

realm that was his due, is it the son-in-law of powerful Adrastus whom I now behold? Is this the manner in which I go to meet thy triumph? Raise hither thy countenance and thy sightless eyes: Argia has come to thy Thebes; lead me then inside thy city, show me thy father's halls and make me welcome in thy turn. Alas! what am I doing? thou liest on the naked earth, and this is all that thou dost own of thy native land. What were those quarrels? 'Tis sure thy brother holds not dominion here. Didst thou move none of thine own to tears? Where is thy mother? Where the famed Antigone? Verily 'tis for me thou liest dead, for me alone thou didst suffer defeat! I asked thee: Whither marchest thou? Why demandest thou the sceptre denied thee? Thou hast Argos and wilt reign in my father's hall; long honours await thee here, and undivided power. But why do I complain? Myself I gave thee war, and with my own lips begged it of my sorrowing sire – that now I might hold thee thus in my embrace. But it is well, ye gods; I thank thee, Fortune; the distant hope of my wandering is fulfilled: I have found his body whole. Ah! what a deep and gaping wound! Was this his brother's work? Were lies, I pray, that infamous robber? I would outdo the birds, might I but approach him, and keep the beasts away! Hath the fell villain fire as well? But thee thy land shall not behold undowered of flame; burn thou shalt, and tears that may not weep for kings shall rain on thee, and desolate love shall endure and aye tend thy sepulchre; thy son shall be the witness of my sorrow, a little Polynices shall cherish thy couch for me."

[349] Lo! with another torch and other sounds of woe hapless Antigone drew nigh the dead, having scarce won from the town the escape she longed for; for ever do guards attend her, and the king himself bids her be held fast; the times of watching are shortened and more frequent glow the fires. Therefore she makes excuse for her delaying to the gods and her brother, and frantically, so soon as the rough sentinels relaxed one whit their vigilance, burst from out the walls: with such a cry does the virgin lioness terrify the countryside, her fury free at last, when for the first time her mother shares not in her rage. Not long did she tarry, for she knew the cruel plain and where her brother lay in the dust: Menoetes, as he stands unbusied, marks her as she comes, and hushes the groans of his dear ward. But

when the latest sob reached the maiden's uplifted ears, and when she saw by the stars' rays and the light of either torch her mourning raiment and dishevelled hair and face all foul with congealed gore, she cried: "Whose body seekest thou in this night that is mine? Who art thou, daring woman?"

[367] Nought answered the other a long while, but cast her raiment about her husband's face and likewise her own, a prey to sudden fear and awhile forgetful of her sorrow. Antigone, chiding her suspected silence, persists the more, and urges her comrade and herself; but both are lost in utter silence. At last Argia unveiled her face and spoke, yet still clasped the body: "If thou comest to seek aught with me in this stale blood of battle, if thou also fearest Creon's harsh commands, I can with confidence reveal myself to thee. If thou art wretched – and surely I behold tears and signs of grief – come join with me in friendship; Adrastus' royal seed am I – ah! is any near? – at the pyre of my beloved Polynices, though kingdoms set their ban –" the Cadmean maiden started in amaze and trembled, and broke in upon her speech: "Is it I then whom thou dost fear? – how blind is chance! – I, the partner of thy woes? Mine are the limbs thou holdest, mine the corpse thou dost bewail. Take him, he is thine! Ah, shame! Ah, for the cowardly devotion of a sister! She came before me –!"

[385] Side by side they fall, and together embracing the same body mingle greedily their tears and tresses, and share his limbs between them, and anon return with united lament to his face and glut themselves by turns upon his well-loved breast. And while they recall the one her brother and the other her spouse, and each tells to each the tale of Argos and of Thebes, Argia in longer strain brings to mind her own sad story: "By the sacred communion of our stolen mourning, by our common dead and the witnessing stars I swear to thee: not his lost crown, nor his native soil, nor his dear mother's breast did he desire, wandering exile though he was, but thee alone; of thee, Antigone, he spake by night and day; I was a lesser care and easily relinquished. Yet didst thou perchance before the horrid deed from a lofty turret behold him towering high and giving the Grecian companies their banners, and he looked back at thee from the very line of battle, and saluted thee with his sword and the nodding summit of his helm: but I was far away. But what god drove them to

the extremity of wrath? Did your prayers nought avail? Did the other refuse thy own entreaty?" Antigone had begun to set forth the causes and the cruelty of fate, but the faithful comrade warned them: "Nay finish rather your task! Already the stars are paling in rout before the approaching day; complete your toil, the time for tears will come; kindle the fire, then weep your fill."

[409] Nor far away a roar betrayed the channel of Ismenos where he was flowing still discoloured and befouled by gore. Hither with united effort they feebly bear the mangled limbs, while their companion as weak as they adds his arms to theirs. So did his sisters lave the smoking Phaëthon, Hyperion's son, in the heated Padus: scarce was he interred, when a weeping grove rose by the river-side. When the filth was purged in the stream and the body was once more beautiful in death, the wretched women after the last kisses searched for fire, but dead and cold were the ashes in the mouldering pits, and all the pyres were silent. Still there remained one funeral pile, whether by chance or heaven's will, that had been fated to burn the limbs of fierce Eteocles – whether Fortune once more gave opportunity for portents, or the Fury had spared the fires for mutual strife. Here both in their eagerness beheld a feeble glow still alive among the blackened timbers, and together wept tears of joy; nor yet knew they whose the pyre, but prayed, whosoe'er it be, that he be favourable and graciously admit a partner to his latest ashes and unite their ghosts.

[429] Once more behold the brothers: as soon as the devouring fire touched the body, the pile shook, and streams up with double head, each darting tongues of flashing light. As though pale Orcus had set in conflict the torches of the Eumenides, each ball of fire threatens and strives to outreach the other; the very timbers, with all their massive weight, were moved and gave way a space. The maiden cries out in terror: "We are undone; ourselves we have stirred his wrath in death. It was his brother; who else would be so cruel as to spurn the approach of a stranger ghost? Lo! I recognize the broken buckler and the charred sword-belt, ay, it was his brother! Seest thou how the flame shrinks away and yet rushes to the fight? Alive, ay, alive is that impious hatred. The war was in vain: while thus ye strive, unhappy ones, Creon has conquered after all! Gone is your

realm, why then such fury? For whom do ye rage? Appease your anger. And thou, everywhere an exile, ever debarred from justice, yield at last; this is thy wife's and thy sister's prayer, else shall we leap into the fierce flame to part you."

[447] Scarce had she spoken, when a sudden tremor shook the plain and the lofty roofs, and increased the chasm of the discordant pyre, while the watchmen, whose very sleep shaped images of woe, started from repose: straightway the soldiers rush forth, and with a ring of arms search the whole countryside. As they draw nigh, the old man alone has fear; but the women openly before the pyre confess to have spurned fierce Creon's command, and with loud cry admit their secret deed, careless, for they see that already the whole body is consumed. Ambitious are they for cruel destruction, and a spirited hope of death is aflame within them: they contend that they stole, the one her consort's, the other her kinsman's limbs, and prove their case by turns: "I brought the body," "but I the fire," "I was led by affection," "I by love." They delight to ask for cruel punishment and to thrust their arms into the chains. Gone is the reverence that but now was in the words of each; wrath and hatred one would deem it, so loud on either side rise the cries of discord; they even drag their captors before the king.

[464] But far away Juno leads the distraught Phoronean dames – herself no less distraught – to the walls of Athens, having gained at last the goodwill of Pallas, and goes before them on the road; she gives the train of mourners favour in the people's sight and inspires reverence for their tears. With her own hand she gives them boughs of olive and supplicating fillets, and teaches them to hide their faces in their robes and bear before them urns untenanted by the dead. A multitude of every age streams forth from the Erechthean homes and fills the housetops and the streets; whence comes this swarm? Whence so many mourners together? Not yet do they know the cause of their distress, yet are already weeping. With either concourse the goddess mingles and tells them of all: of what race they are sprung, what deaths they are bewailing, and what they seek; they themselves too in various converse make everywhere loud outcry against the Ogygian laws and inhuman Creon. No lengthier plaint do the Getic birds utter upon the foreign housetops in mutilated speech, when

they exclaim against he treachery of the wedding bower and Tereus' cruel deed.

[481] There was in the midst of the city an altar belonging to no god of power; gentle Clemency had there her seat, and the wretched made it sacred; never lacked she a new suppliant, none did she condemn or refuse their prayers. All that ask are heard, night and day may one approach and win the heart of the goddess by complaints alone. No costly rites are hers; she accepts no incense flame, no blood deep-welling; tears flow upon her altar, sad offerings of severed tresses hang above it, and raiment left when Fortune changed. Around is a grove of gentle trees, marked by the cult of the venerable, wool-entwined laurel and the suppliant olive. No image is there, to no metal is the divine form entrusted, in hearts and minds does the goddess delight to dwell. The distressed are ever nigh her, her precinct ever swarms with needy folk, only to the prosperous is her shrine unknown. Fame says that the sons of Hercules, saved in battle after the death of their divine sire, set up this altar; but Fame comes short of truth: 'tis right to believe that the heavenly ones themselves, to whom Athens was ever a welcoming land, as once they gave laws and a new man and sacred ceremonies and the sees that here descended upon the empty earth, so now sanctified in this spot a common refuge for travelling souls, whence the wrath and threatenings of monarchs might be far removed, and Fortune depart from a shrine of righteousness. Already to countless races were those altars known; hither came flocking those defeated in war and exiled from their country, kings who had lost their realms and those guilty of grievous crime, and sought for peace; and later this abode of kindness o'ercame the rage of Oedipus and sheltered the murder of Olynthus and defended hapless Orestes from his mother. Hither guided by the common folk comes the distressful band of Lerna, and the crowd of previous votaries give way before them. Scarce were they arrived, when their troubles were soothed and their hearts had rest: even as cranes chased o'er the deep by their native North wind, beholding Pharos, spread in denser array over the sky and raise a joyful clamour; they delight beneath a cloudless heaven to thin scorn of snows, and to loose the grip of winter by the banks of Nile.

[519] And now Theseus, drawing nigh his native land in laurelled

car after fierce battling with the Scythian folk, is heralded by glad applause and the heaven-flung shout of the populace and the merry trump of warfare ended. Before the chief are borne his spoils, and virgin chariots that recall the grim War-God, and wagons heaped with crests and downcast steeds and broken axes, wherewith the foe were wont to cleave the forests and frozen Maeotis, light quivers too are borne and baldricks fiery with gems and targes stained with the blood of the warrior-maids. They themselves, still unafraid, admit no thought of sex, and scorn to entreat nor utter mean lament, only they seek the shrine of unwedded Minerva. The first passion of the folk is to behold the conqueror, drawn by his four snow-white steeds; Hippolyte too drew all toward her, friendly now in look and patient of the marriage-bond. With hushed whispers and sidelong gaze the Attic dames marvel that she has broken her country's austere laws, that her locks are trim, and all her bosom hidden beneath her robe, that though a barbarian she mingles with mighty Athens, and comes to bear offspring to her foeman-lord.

[540] The sorrowful daughters of Pelops moved a short space from the altars where they sat, and marvelled at the triumph with its train of spoils, and their vanquished lords came once more to their minds. And when the conqueror halted the chariots and from his proud car inquired the causes that had brought them and with kind attention bade them make their request, the wife of Capaneus dared speak before the others: "Warlike son of Aegeus, for whom Fortune opens up vast fields of unexpected glory through our ruin, no strangers by race are we, nor guilty of any heinous crime; our home was Argos, and our husband princes, would they had not been brave also! What need was there to arouse a sevenfold host, and chastise the city of Agenor? We complain not that they were slain; but they were no monsters risen from Sicilian dens or twyformed creatures of Ossa who fell in the battle. Of their race and famous sires I speak not; they were men, renowned Theseus, and of the seed of men, born to the selfsame stars to the same human lot, the same food and drink as ye are; yet Creon denies them fire, and like the father of the Furies or the ferryman of Lethe's stream debars them from the Stygian gate and keeps them hovering doubtfully between the worlds of heaven and hell. Alas! sovereign Nature! Where are the gods? Where is the

hurler of the unrighteous brand? Where art thou, Athens? Already the seventh dawn shrinks with frightened steeds from their corpses; the starry pole shudders in all its splendours and withdraws its rays; already the very birds and prowling beasts loathe the horrid carrion and the battle-field that reeks of corruption and heavily taints the breezes and the air. How much indeed remains? let him but permit me to sweep up bare bones and putrid gore! Make haste, ye worthy sons of Cecrops! such a vengeance becomes you, before the Emathians and Thracians suffer, and every race of men that would fain be burnt on pyres and be given the last rites of death. For what limit will be set to his fury? We made war, I grant it; but hatred is assuaged, and death has put an end to sullen wrath. Thou also, for so Fame hath taught us of thy noble deeds, didst not give Sinis and the unutterable Cercyon to cruel monsters, and wert willing to let fierce Sciron burn. I ween too that Tanais smoked with Amazonian pyres, whence thou hast brought this host: deem then this triumph also worthy of thee. Devote one exploit to earth and heaven and hell alike, if thou didst save thy native Marathon from fear, and the halls of Crete, and if the aged dame that welcomed thee shed not her tears in vain. So may no battles of thine lack Pallas' aid, nor the divine Tirynthian envy thy equal exploits, may thy mother ever behold thee triumphant in thy car, and Athens know not defeat nor ever make a prayer like mine!"

[587] She spoke: they all with hands outstretched make clamorous echo to her words; the Neptunian hero flushed, deeply stirred by their tears; soon fired by righteous anger he cries: "What Fury has inspired this strange unkingly conduct? Not so minded were the Greeks at my departure, when I sought Scythia and the Pontic snows; whence this new madness? Thoughtest thou Theseus conquered, fell Creon? I am near at hand, think me not blood-weary; even yet my spear thirsts for righteous slaughter. I make no delay; turn on the instant thy galloping steed, most trusty Phegeus, speed to the Tyrian towers and proclaim that the Danai must burn of Thebes must fight." So speaks he, forgetful of the labours of warfare and the march, and encourages his men and inspires their exhausted strength anew: as when a bull has lately won back his brides and pasture and ceased from battle, if by chance another glade resound with a warrior's lowing, then,

though his neck and breast be dripping with the bloody rain, he prepares afresh for war and pawing the plain hides his groaning and conceals his wounds in dust. Tritonia herself smote upon her buckler the Libyan terror, the Medusa that guards her bosom. Straightway all the serpents rose erect together, and in a mass looked towards Thebe; not yet were the Attic warriors on the march, and already ill-fated Dirce trembled at the trumpets' sound.

[611] At once not only are they inflamed to war who were returned from sharing the Caucasian victory: all the countryside stirred up its untrained sons to war. They flock together and of their own accord follow their prince's standard: the men who spare not chilly Brauron and the Monychian fields and Piraeus, firm ground for frightened sailors, and Marathon, not yet famous for her Eastern triumph. The homesteads of Icarius and of Celeus that entertained their native gods send troops to battle, green Melaenae too, and Aegaleos, rich in forests, and Parnes, friend of vines, and Lycabessos, richer in the juicy olive. Violent Alaeus came, and the ploughman of fragrant Hymettus, thou, too, Acharnae, who didst clothe the bare wands in ivy. Sunion, far seen of Eastern prow, is left behind, whence Aegeus fell, deceived by the lying sails of the Cretan bark, and gave a name to the wandering main. These folk from Salamis, those from Eleusis, Ceres' town, were sent, their ploughs hung up, to the dreadful fray, and they whom Callirhoë enfolds with her nine errant streams, and Elisos who privy to Orithyia's rape concealed beneath his banks the Thracian lover. That hill too is emptied for the fight, where gods strove mightily, until a new tree rose from the doubting rocks and cast its long shadow on the retreating sea. Hippolyte too would have led her Northern squadrons to the Cadmean walls, but the already certain hope of her swelling womb restrains her, and her spouse entreats her to dismiss the thoughts of battle and in the marriage-bower to dedicate her war-spent quiver.

[639] When the chief perceives them in warlike mood and ablaze with joyous steel, how they give hurried kisses and brief embraces to their loving children, he speaks thus from his lofty chariot: "Soldiers, who will defend with me the laws of nations and the covenants of heaven, take courage worthy of our emprise! For us, 'tis clear, stands the favour of all gods and men, Nature our guide and the silent

multitudes of Avernus: for them the troops of the Furies, that Thebes has marshalled, and the snake-haired Sisters bring forth their banners. Onward in warlike spirit, and trust, I pray you, in a cause so noble!" He spake, and hurling his spear dashed forth upon the road: as when Jupiter plants his cloudy footsteps upon the Hyperborean pole and makes the stars tremble at the oncoming of winter, Aeolia is riven, and the storm, indignant at its long idleness, takes heart, and the North whistles with the hurricane; then roar the mountains and the waves, clouds battle in the blind gloom, and thunders and crazed lightnings revel.

[656] The smitten earth groans, the heavy hoof changes the aspect of the verdant plains, and the crushed fields expire beneath countless troops of horse and foot, nor is the gleam of armour lost in the thick dust, but flashes far into the air, and the spears burn amid the clouds. Night too and the quiet shades they add to their toil, and the warriors mightily strive how they may speed the army's march, who may proclaim from a hillock the first sight of Thebes, who lance will first stand fixed in the Ogygian rampart. But from afar Theseus, son of Neptune, dwarfs the ranks with his huge shield, and bears upon its boss the hundred cities and hundred walls of Crete, the prelude to his own renown, and himself in the windings of the monstrous cave twisting the shaggy neck of the struggling bull, and binding him fast with sinewy arms and grip of either hand, and avoiding the horns with head drawn back. Terrified are the folk when he goes to battle 'neath the shelter of that grim device, to behold Theseus in double shape and his hands twice drenched in gore; he himself recalls his deeds of old, the band of comrades and the once-dreaded doorway and the pale face of the Gnosian maid as she followed out the clue.

[677] But meanwhile the ruthless Creon leads onward to death Antigone and the widowed daughter of Adrastus, their hands fettered behind them; both cheerful and proudly eager for death, they hold out their necks to the swords and battle the cruel king, when lo! bearing Theseus' message Phegeus stood there. All peaceful he with innocent olive-branch, but war is his intent, and war he threatens in loud and angry tones, and well remembering his lord's commands repeats that he will soon be nigh at hand in person, soon covering the countryside as he passes with all his cohorts. The Theban stood in

doubt amid surging cares, his anger wavers and his first wrath grows cool. Then steeling his heart, and with a feigned and sullen smile he answered: "Too slight assurance then did we give of Mycenae's ruin? Lo! here come others to vex our walls! Let them come! We take the challenge! But let them not whine when they are beaten; one law awaits the conquered." He speaks, but sees the daylight wane in thickening dust, and the sharp outlines fade from the Tyrian hills; yet in pale anxiety he bids his people arm and go to war, and suddenly beholds in his palace-hall the Furies, and Menoeceus weeping, and the Pelasgians exultant on their pyres. Ah! fatal day! when peace gained for Thebes at such a price of blood is lost again! They tear down the arms lately hung in their native shrines, and shield their bodies with pierced bucklers, don mutilated helms and take up gore-encrusted spears; none is gay with quiver or sword, none is glorious to behold upon his charger; no trust is there in the palisade, the city walls are all agape, the gates cry for defences; the former foe hath them in possession; the battlements are gone: Capaneus hath o'erthrown them; strengthless and faint, the warriors no more give the last kisses to wives or children, nor do their dazed parents utter any prayer.

[709] Meanwhile the Attic chief, beholding the rays burst through the clouds in growing splendour and the sun first glint upon the arms, leaps down into the plain where by the walls the dead still lie unburied, and breathing beneath his dusty helm the dread vapours of the tainted air he groans and is inflamed to righteous rage for war. His honour at least did the Theban chieftain pay to the hapless Danaans, that he engaged not the warring hosts in a second battle o'er the very bodies of the fallen; or else, that his impious lust might lose naught of mangled carnage, does he choose a virgin field to drink up the streams of gore? Already in far different wise Bellona summons the armies to mutual fight: here only is heard the battle-cry, here only the trumpet-blast; there frail warriors stand, with drooping ineffectual swords and loosened slings; they give way, and drawing back their armour display old wounds yet bleeding. Already even the Cecropian chiefs have lost their ardour for the fray, their temper wanes and confident valour flames less high; just as the wrath of the winds is weakened, if no forest impede their raging blasts, and the

furious billows are silent where there is no shore.

[730] But when Theseus, born of the main, held aloft his Marathonian oaken shaft, whose cruel shadow as he lifted it fell upon the foe, and the spear-point flashed o'er the battle-field afar – as though father Mavors were driving his Edonian chariot down from Haemus' summit, with death and Panic riding upon his hurrying axle, even so does pale fear drive the sons of Agenor in terror-stricken rout; but Theseus disdains to do battle with the fugitives, his right hand thinks scorn of easy victims. The rest of the gallant host sate their rage in common slaughter. Even so dogs and coward wolves delight in prey that lies cowering at their feet, while anger is the strength of mighty lions. Yet he slays Olenius and Lamyrus, the one as he takes arrows from his quiver, the other as he raises a great stone aloft, and the sons of Alcetus, trusting in their threefold might, whom he pierces at long range with as many spears. Phyleus received the spear-point in his breast, Helops bit the iron with his teeth, the missile sped through the shoulder of Iapyx. And now he makes for Haemon riding aloft in four-horsed car, and whirls the terrible javelin with his arm; the other swerved his frightened steeds, but the spear, far-flung, struck home, and piercing two of them thirsted for yet a third wound, but the point was stayed by the intervening pole.

[752] But Creon alone is the object of his hopes and prayers, him alone he summons with terrible challenge amid all the squadrons of the field; he perceives him on a battle-front afar, exhorting his troops and uttering desperate threats in vain. His comrades flee away, but those of Theseus leave him at his bidding, relying on the gods and the prowess of their chief; Creon restrains his men and calls them back, but seeing that he is hated by either side alike, he nerves himself to a last outburst of rage, inspired now by the frenzy of doom and emboldened by inevitable death: "Tis with no targe-bearing girls thou doest battle here; no maiden's hands are ours, be sure; here is the stern strife of men who have sent great Tydeus and furious Hippomedon to death, and the vast bulk of Capaneus to the shades. What headlong madness drove thee to fight, thou reckless fool? Seest thou not their corpses whom thou wouldst avenge?" So he spoke, and lodged his missile fruitlessly in the buckler's edge.

[768] But the terrible son of Aegeus laughed at his words and deed alike, and poising his iron-clad shaft for a mighty blow first proudly cries in thunderous accents: "Ye Argive spirits, to whom I offer this victim, open wide the void of Tartarus, bring forth the Avenging Furies, lo! Creon comes!" He spoke, and the quivering spear rends the air; then, where with iron weft the slender chains combine to form the manifold cuirass, it falls; through a thousand meshes spirits upward the accursed blood; he sinks, his eyes open in the last spasm of death. Theseus stands over him in stern wrath, and spoiling him of his armour speaks: "Now art thou pleased to give dead foes the fire that is their due? Now wilt thou bury the vanquished? Go to thy dreadful reckoning, yet be assured of thy own burial."

[782] From either side the banners meet and mingle in friendly tumult; on the very field of war a treaty is made, and Theseus is now a welcome guest; they beg him to approach their walls and to deem their homes worthy of his presence. The victor disdains not to set foot in the dwellings of his foes; the Ogygian dames and maidens rejoice: even as, o'ercome by the warring thyrsus, Ganges by now drunken applauded womanly revels. Lo! yonder on the shady heights of Dirce a shout of women shakes the vault, and the Pelasgian matrons come running down: like raving Thyiads are they, summoned to Bacchus' wars, demanding, thou mightest deem, or having done some deed of horror; their wailing is of joy, fresh tears gush forth; they dart now here, now there, doubting whether first to seek great-hearted Theseus, or Creon, or their own kinsmen; their widowed grief leads them to the dead.

[797] I could not, even if some god gave hundredfold utterance to my heart, recount in worthy strains so vast a funeral of chieftains alike and common folk, so many lamentations united: how fearless Evadne with impetuous bound had her fill of the fires she loved and sought the thunderbolt in that mighty breast, how as she lay and showered kisses on his terrible form his unhappy spouse made excuse for Tydeus; how Argia tells her sister the story of the cruel watchmen, with what lament the Erymanthian mother bewails the Arcadian, the Arcadian, who keeps his beauty though all his blood is spent, the Arcadian, wept for by either host alike. Scarce would new inspiration or Apollo's presence sustain the task, and my little bark

has voyaged far and deserves her haven.

[810] Wilt thou endure in the time to come, O my Thebaid, for twelve years object of my wakeful toil, wilt thou survive thy master and be read? Of a truth already present Fame hath paved thee a friendly road, and begun to hold thee up, young as thou art, to future ages. Already great-hearted Caesar deigns to know thee, and the youth of Italy eagerly learns and recounts thy verse. O live, I pray! nor rival the divine Aeneid, but follow afar and ever venerate its footsteps. Soon, if any envy as yet o'erclouds thee, it shall pass away, and, after I am gone, thy well-won honours shall be duly paid.

THE END

THE SILVAE



Translated by J. H. Mozley

Composed between 89 and 96 AD, the *Silvae* is a collection of 32 occasional poems in hexameters, hendecasyllables and lyric metres, divided into five books. Each book contains a prose preface introducing and dedicating the book. The subjects of the poetry are varied and provide a wealth of information about Domitian's Rome and the life of the poet Statius.

The first three books are now believed to have been published together following 93 AD, a year after the publication of the *Thebaid*, whilst Book 4 was probably released two years later and Book 5 is thought to have been released posthumously in 96. Each book is datable by a comparison of the careers of the individual poems' addressees and references in other authors such as Martial.

The title of the collection is assumed to refer to the lost *Silvae* of Lucan. In Latin, 'silva' which in the nominative plural is *Silvae*, can mean both "forest" and "material." Silva was used to describe the draft of a poet's work, which was composed spontaneously in a moment of inspiration and which was then revised into a polished and metrical poem. This suggests that the *Silvae* are revised, impromptu pieces of occasional poetry, composed in the matter of a few days. Statius describes his method of composition in the preface of the first book, explaining how they "streamed from my pen in the heat of the moment, a sort of pleasurable haste, emerging from my bosom one by one."

Panegyric and occasional poetry after Statius was strongly influenced by the *Silvae*. Statius' influence can be particularly identified in the works of Claudian and Nemesianus. In the Renaissance, the *Silvae* received modern commentaries by Domizio Calderini (1469) and more importantly by Angelo Poliziano (1480),

who is credited with writing an extensive commentary on the collection.



Sculpture of Domitian from the Vatican Museum. References to Domitian fill the 'Silvae', as Statius commemorates the Emperor's construction projects, administration, and circle of courtiers.

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Detail from Raphael's 'The Parnassus', in the Stanze di Raffaello, Palace of the Vatican, depicting Statius in the middle, facing the viewer, with Homer and Virgil on his left and the Muses Thalia, Clio, Euterpe and Calliope on the right.

BOOK I

STATIUS TO HIS FRIEND STELLA: GREETING!

LONG and seriously have I hesitated, my excellent Stella — distinguished as you are in your chosen branch of our common pursuit — about these pieces of mine, which were produced in the heat of the moment and by a kind of joyful glow of improvisation, whether I should collect them, after they have issued one by one from my bosom, and send them forth together. For why should I burden myself with the responsibility for this additional publication, when I am still apprehensive for my *Thebaid*, although it has left my hands? But we read the “Gnat,” and deign to recognize even the “Battle of the Frogs”; nor is there any of the great poets who has not made prelude to his works in lighter vein. Again, was it not too late to keep these poems back, when others were already in the possession of those in whose honour they were written (yourself among them)? Yet with most people much of their claim to a lenient judgement must disappear, since they have lost their impromptu nature, the only charm that they possessed. For none of them took longer than two days to write, while some were turned out in a single day. How I fear lest the poems themselves make that only too plain!

The first piece can appeal to a witness of inviolable sanctity: for “from Jove must I needs begin.” These hundred lines on the Great Horse I was bidden deliver to our most indulgent Prince the day after he had dedicated it. “Possibly,” some one will say, “you had seen the statue already.” You will answer him, my dearest Stella, you who know that the Epithalamium you demanded of me was written in two days. A bold piece of work, by Hercules! but all the same it contains three hundred hexameters — and perhaps you will tell a fib for a colleague. Certainly Manilius Vopiscus, a man of great erudition, who is foremost in rescuing from decay our almost vanishing literature, often boasts on my account, and quite spontaneously, that my sketch of his country-house at Tibur was done in one day. Then comes a poem dedicated to Rutilius Gallicus on his recovery from sickness, upon which I say nothing, lest I seem to be taking

advantage of the death of my witness to exaggerate. For I can prove my case by the evidence of Claudius Etruscus, who received his “Bath” from me within the interval of a dinner. Last comes “The Kalends of December,” which at all events will find credence; for a night so happily spent and so unprecedented for public amusements...

I. THE GREAT EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF THE EMPEROR DOMITIAN

This statue was dedicated to Domitian perhaps about a d. 91 (i. 36); its appearance and position are described; it is hailed by Curtius; the poet declares it to be as immortal as Rome.

What mighty mass redoubled by the huge form surmounting it stands gathering to itself the Latian forum? Did it glide down, a completed work, from heaven? Was the effigy moulded in Sicilian furnaces, leaving Brontes and Steropes weary? or have Palladian hands sculptured thee for us, O Germanicus, in such guise as Rhine of late beheld thee reining thy steed, and the astounded Dacian's arduous home?

Come, now, let Fame of old time marvel at the age-long wonder of the Dardan horse, for whom Dindymon abased his sacred head and Ida was shorn of her leafy groves. This horse would Pergamum ne'er have held, though wide its walls were rent, nor could the mingled throng of lads and unwedded girls have drawn it, nor Aeneas himself nor mighty Hector! That one, besides, was harmful, and contained fierce Achaeans: this one is commended by his gentle rider. 'Tis a pleasure to behold that countenance whereon the marks of war are blended with the guise of tranquil peace. And think not that truth is here surpassed; equal beauty and splendour has he, and equal dignity. Not more loftily does the Bistonian steed bear Mars when the fighting is done, exulting in the mighty weight, and swiftly flies by the river till he is all asteam and with his strong blowing stirs up the waves of Strymon.

Well suited to the work are its surroundings. Here facing it he opens wide his portals, who weary with warfare, by the gift of his adopted son, first showed our deities the way to heaven; and from thy face he learns thy greater gentleness in arms, who not even against the foreigner's rage art easily stern, but with Cattians and with Dacians makest bond. Under thy leadership both his son-in-law, now the lesser man, and Cato had bowed to Caesar's sway. Lengthwise thy flanks are guarded, on this hand by the Julian edifice, on that by

the high basilica of warlike Paullus; thy back the Sire beholds, and Concord with tranquil brow.

Thou thyself with lofty head enshrined in the pure air dost tower resplendent over the temples, and seemest to look forth to see whether the new Palace, despising the flames, be rising in greater beauty, or whether the brand of Trojan fire keep silent watch, and Vesta now be praising the proved worth of her ministrants. Thy right hand bids battles cease; thy left the Tritonian maiden overburdens not, and holding out Medusa's severed head incites thy steed as with a goad; never had the goddess choicer resting-place, not even if thou, O Father, didst hold her. Thy breast is such as might avail to solve the riddles of the universe, and thereon Temese has exhausted the wealth of all her mines; a cloak hangs from thy shoulders; the sword sleeps by thy untroubled side: even so vast a blade docs threatening Orion wield on winter nights and terrify the stars. But the steed, counterfeiting the proud mien and high mettle of a horse, tosses his head in greater spirit and makes as though to move; the mane stands stiff upon his neck, his shoulders thrill with life, and his flanks spread wide enough for those mighty spurs; in place of a clod of empty earth his brazen hoof tramples the hair of captive Rhine. Seeing him, Adrastus' horse Arion would have been sore afraid, yea Castor's Cyllarus fears as he looks forth upon him from his neighbouring temple. Never will this steed suffer another master's rein; this curb is his for ever, one star, and one star only will he serve. Scarce doth the soil hold, and the ground pants beneath the pressure of so vast a weight; and not of iron or bronze: 'tis under thy deity it trembles, ay, even should an everlasting rock support thee, such as would bear the peaks of a mountain piled upon it, or have endured to be pressed by the knee of heaven-sustaining Atlas.

No lengthy tarrying drew out the time. The present beauty of the god itself makes labour sweet, and the workmen intent upon their task marvel at their greater vigour. Towering cranes creak and rattle; continuous runs the roar over the seven heights of Mars, and drowns the wandering noises of mighty Rome.

The guardian of the spot himself, whose memorable name the hallowed chasm and famous pools preserve, hearing the ceaseless clash of bronze and the Forum echoing with vigorous blows, raises

his grisly visage, venerable even in decay, and his head revered for the well-deserved oak-wreath. And first, affrighted at the huge form and flashing glance of a mightier steed, he thrice in dismay bowed his lofty neck beneath the lake; then, joyful at the sight of his prince: "Hail, offspring and sire of mighty deities," he cries, "whose godhead I heard of from afar! Now is my lake blessed, now is it holy, since it has been granted me to know thee nigh at hand, and from my neighbouring seat to watch thy immortal brightness. Once only was I the author and winner of salvation for the folk of Romulus: thou dost win the wars of Jove and the battles of the Rhine, thou dost quell the strife of citizens, and in long warfare constrain the tardy mountain to submit. But if our age had borne thee, thou wouldest have ventured to plunge into the lake's depths, though I dared not; but Rome would have held back thy rein."

Let that steed give place, whose statue stands in Caesar's Forum, over against Dione's shrine — thy daring work, 'tis said, Lysippus, for the Pellaeon chief; thereafter on marvelling back he bore the effigy of Caesar — scarce could your straining sight discover how far the downward view from this monarch to that. Who is so boorish as to deny, when he has seen both, that ruler differs from ruler as steed from steed?

This statue fears no rainy squalls of winter or triple fire of Jove, nor the cohorts of Aeolus' prison-house nor the long lingering years: it will stand while earth and sky abide, while Rome's sun endures. Hither also in the silent night, when things of earth find favour with the gods above, will thy kinsfolk, leaving heaven, glide down and join with thee in close embrace. Son and brother, sire and sister will seek thy welcoming arms: about thy sole neck will cluster all heaven's stars.

Enjoy for ever the people's and the mighty Senate's gift. Fain would the wax of Apelles have portrayed thee, and the old Athenian would have longed to set thy likeness in a new temple of Elean Jove; yea, soft Tarentum would rather have thy visage, and fierce Rhodes, scorning her Phoebus, thy flame-like glance. Keep thy affections fixed on earth, and inhabit thyself the shrines we dedicate to thee; let not heaven's high court delight thee, but mayst thou joyously see thy grandsons offer incense to this our gift.

II. AN EPITHALAMIUM IN HONOUR OF STELLA AND VIOLENTILLA

A marriage-song in honour of Lucius Armatins Stella and his bride Violentilla. Stella was a young noble, a poet and a friend of Statius; he was one of the XV viri (see n on I. 176), and had held some curule office. The poem contains a long episode relating how Venus and one of her Cupids brought about the match,; the usual features of an Epithalamium (praise of the pair, description of the bride, and of the marriage-festival) are freely treated.

Whence comes this sound of divine melody upon the Latian hills?
For whom, O Paean, dost thou ply thy quill anew and hang the
eloquent ivory from thy tress-strewn shoulders? Lo! far away the
goddesses troop down from musical Helicon, and toss on high with
ninefold torch the flame that hallows wedded union and streams of
song from Pierian fountains. Among them pert-faced Elegy draws
nigh, loftier of mien than is her wont, and implores the goddesses as
she goes about, fain to support her one lame foot, and desires to
make a tenth Muse and mingles with the Sisters unperceived. The
mother of Aeneas with her own hand leads forth the bride, downcast
of look and the sweet blush of chastity upon her; herself she prepares
the couch and the sacred rites, and with a Latin girdle dissembles her
deity and tempers the brilliance of eyes and cheeks and tresses, eager
to yield before the new bride.

Ah, now do I learn what day is this, what hath caused this solemn
rite: 'tis thou, Stella, thou whom that choir — fling wide the gates!
— is hymning; for thee Phoebus and Euan and the swift Tegean
from the shades of Maenalus bring garlands. Nor do winsome Love
and Grace grow weary in scattering countless blossoms and cloudy
perfumes o'er thee as thou holdest close-locked the snow-white
limbs of thy longed-for bride. And now roses, now lilies mixed with
violets dost thou receive upon thy brow, as thou shieldest the fair
face of thy mistress.

This then was the day, laid up in the white wool of the Fates,
whereon the marriage-song of Stella and Violentilla should be

proclaimed and sung. Let cares and fears give place, and the clever hints of lying fables cease, and, Rumour, be thou silent; that love that ranged so free now brooks control and takes the bridle; we have done with gossip and our citizens have seen the kisses so long talked of. Yet thou in bewilderment — although a night so marvellous has been granted thee — still dost pray, and art affrighted that kindly heaven has given thee thy wish. Sigh no more, sweet poet, she is thine. The door lies open, and thou canst come and go with fearless step; no doorkeeper, no rule of honour stays thee now. At last take thy fill of the desired embrace — it is thine to take! — and remember the while those nights of misery.

Worthy indeed were thy reward, even though Juno set thee Hereulean toils, and the Fates gave thee monsters to contend withal, though thou wert swept through the Cyanean surge. To gain her it were worth while to run the race in terror of Pisa's law and hear the shouts of Oenomaus in hot pursuit. Nor had such a prize been thine, hadst thou, a bold shepherd lad, held thy court on Dardan Ida, nor though the warm-hearted Dawn had preferred thee, and snatched thee up and borne thee in her chariot through the air.

But what was the cause that brought to the poet the unhopd-for joys of wedlock? Do thou teach me, lovely Erato, here by my side, while the halls and portals are astir with folk, and many a staff beats upon the threshold. Time permits apt converse, and the poet's home knows well how to listen.

Once on a time, where the milky region is set in a tranquil heaven, lay kindly Venus in her bower, whence night had but lately fled, faint in the rough embrace of her Getic lord. About the posts and pillows of her couch swarm a troop of tender Loves, begging her make sign where she bids them bear her torches, what hearts they shall transfix: whether to wreak their cruelty on land or sea, to set gods at variance or yet once more to vex the Thunderer. Herself she has yet no purpose, no certain will or pleasure. Weary she lies upon her cushions, where once the Lenmian chains crept over the bed and held it fast, learning its guilty secret. Then a boy of that winged crowd, whose mouth was fieriest and whose deft hand ne'er sent his arrow amiss, from the midst of the troop thus called to her in his sweet boyish voice — his quivered brethren held their peace.

“Mother,” says he, “thou knowest how no warfare finds my right hand idle; whomsoe’er of gods or men thou dost assign me, he feels the smart. Yet once, O Mother, suffer us to be moved by the tears and suppliant hands, by the vows and prayers of men; for not of steely adamant are we born, but are all thy offspring. There is a youth of famous Latin family, whom nobility rejoicing brought forth of old patrician stock, and in prescience of his beauty named straightway from our sky. Him ere now have I plied relentlessly — such was thy pleasure — with all my quiver’s armoury, and pierced him to his dismay with a thick hail of darts; and for all he is much sought by Ausonian matrons as a son-in-law, I have quelled and mastered him, and bidden him bear a noble lady’s yoke and spend long years in hoping. But her we spared — such was thy command — and did but lightly graze with the flame’s tip and loose-strung bow. Since then I can bear marvelling witness what fires the heart-sick youth is smothering, what strong urgency of mine he suffers night and day.

None ever, mother, have I so fiercely pressed, thrusting home oft-repeated wounds. And yet I saw eager Hippomenes run the cruel course, but even at the very goal lie was not so pale; and I saw, too, the youth of Abydos, whose arms did vie with oars, and praised his skill and often shone before him as he swam: yet less was that heat wherewith the savage sea grew warm; thou, O youth, hast surpassed those loves of old. I myself, amazed that thou couldst endure such gusts of passion, have strengthened thy resolve and wiped thy streaming eyes with soothing plumes. How oft has Apollo complained to me of his poet’s grief! Grant him at last, O Mother, the bride of his desire. Our comrade is he, and loyally bears our standard; he could tell of armed prowess and heroes’ famous deeds and fields flowing with blood, but his quill is dedicate to thee and he prefers to walk in gentle poethood and twine our myrtle with bay. The follies of lovers are his theme, and his own or others’ wounds; O Mother, what reverence hath he for thy Paphian godhead! ’twas he that bewailed the death of our poor dove.” He made an end, and from his mother’s soft neck hung persuasive, making her bosom warm with his covering wings. With a look that scorned not his petition she replied: “A large request and rarely granted e’en to lovers that I myself have proved, this of Pieria’s young votary! Marvelling at this

maiden's peerless beauty, that rivalled the glory of her sires and her family's renown, I took her to me at her birth and cherished her in my bosom: nor, child, has my hand grown weary of giving comeliness to face and form and smoothing with rich balm her tresses. She has grown up my own sweet image. Behold even from here the lofty beauty of her brow and high-piled hair. Reckon how far she doth tower above the matrons of Rome: even so far as the Latonian maid out-tops the nymphs, or I myself stand out above the Nereids. This girl is worthy to rise with me from out the dark-blue waves; she could sit with me upon my chariot-shell. Nay, could she have climbed to the flaming mansions and entered this abode, even you, ye Loves, would be deceived. Although in my bounty I have given her the boon of wealth, her mind is a yet richer dower. Already I complain that the avaricious Seres are stripping their diminished groves, that Clymene's fruit is failing, that the green Sisters weep not tears enough; that already too few fleeces are blushing with Sidonian dye, and too rarely freeze the crystals of the immemorial snows. For her Tagus and Hermus at my bidding run down their yellow sand — nor yet do they suffice for her arraying; for her Glaucus and Proteus and every Nereid go in search of Indian necklaces. If thou, Phoebus, hadst seen her on the fields of Thessaly, Daphne had wandered unafraid. If on Naxos' shore she had been spied by Theseus' couch, Euhan, too, would have fled from the Cretan maid and left her desolate. Nay, had not Juno appeased me by her endless plaint, heaven's lord would for this maid have taken the disguise of horns or feathers, on her lap had Jove descended in true gold. But the youth whom thou favourest, my son, my chiefest power, shall have his will, though many a time she refuse with tears to bear the yoke of a second wedlock. She herself, I have noticed, is already yielding, and in her turn grows warm toward her lover." With these words she raised her starry limbs, and passing the proud threshold of her chamber called to the rein her Amyclaeian doves. Love harnesses them, and seated on the jewelled car bears his mother rejoicing through the clouds. Soon appears the Ilian citadel of Tiber: a lofty mansion spreads wide its shining halls, and the swans exulting beat their wings on its bright portals. Worthy of the goddess was that abode, nor mean after the radiant stars. Here is marble of Libya and

Phrygia, and the hard green Laconian rock; here the winding pattern of the onyx, and the vein that matches the deep sea's hue, and the brilliant stone that is envied by Oebalian purple and the mixer of the Tyrian cauldron. The ceilings rest poised on columns innumerable; the beams glitter in lavish decking of Dalmatian ore. Coolness downstreaming from ancestral trees shuts out the rays of the sun, translucent fountains play in basins of marble; nor does Nature keep her wonted order: here Sirius is cool, midwinter warm, and the house sways the altered seasons to its pleasure.

Kindly Venus rejoiced to see the house of her queenly fosterling, no less than if from the deep sea she were drawing nigh to Paphos or her Idalian Statius are those of Thasos, Chios, and Syene, and the stone called ophites (=serpentine). home or her shrine at Eryx. Then she addressed the maiden, as she reclined alone upon her couch: "How long this slothfulness, this modest, unshared bed, O well-beloved of me among Laurentian "girls? What limit wilt thou set to chastity and thy sworn vow? Wilt thou never submit to a husband's yoke? Soon sadder years will come. Employ thy beauty and use the gifts that are quick to fly. Not for that end did I give thee such charm and pride of countenance and my own spirit, to see thee pass year after year of loneliness, as though thou wert not dear to me. Enough, ay and too much to have despised thy former suitors. For truly this one with his whole manhood's reverent devotion loves thee alone among all others, nor lacks he beauty or noble birth; and, for his poetry, what youths, what maidens all the city through have not his songs by heart? Him also shalt thou see — so far may the Ausonian prince prove gracious! — raise high the twelvefold rods before the due age; of a truth already has he opened Cybele's gates and read the Euboean Sibyl's song. Soon will the Latian Father, whose purpose I may foreknow, bestow upon the youth the purple raiment and the curule ivory, and will permit him to celebrate (a greater glory this) the spoils of Dacia and the laurels newly won. Come, marry then and have done with youth's tarrying. What races, what hearts has my torch failed to subdue? Birds, cattle, savage herds charge were all foreign worships as well as the Sibylline books. of beasts, none have said me nay: the very air, when rain-showers empty the clouds, do I melt into union with the earth. Thus life succeeds to life, and the

world's age is renewed. Whence could have come Troy's later glory and the rescuer of the burning gods, had I not been joined to a Phrygian spouse? how could Lydian Tiber have renewed the stock of my own Iuli? Who could have founded the walls of sevenfold Rome, the head of Latium's empire, had not a Dardan priestess suffered the secret embrace of Mars, which I forbade not?"

By such winning words she inspires the silent girl with the pride of wedlock; her suitor's gifts and prayers are remembered, his tears and wakeful pleading at her gates, and how the whole city sang of the poet's Asteris, before the banquet Asteris, Asteris at night, Asteris at dawn of day, as never Hylas' name resounded. And now she begins gladly to bend her stubborn heart, and now to account herself unfeeling.

Blessing on thy bridal couch, gentlest of Latian bards! Thou hast endured thy hard voyage to the end and the labours of thy quest, and gained thy haven. So does the river that fled sleek Pisa, aflame for an alien love afar, flow with unsullied streams through a channel beneath the sea, until at last arriving he drinks with panting mouth of the Sicanian springs; the Naiad marvels at the freshness of his kisses, nor can believe her lover has come from the open main.

What a day was that, O Stella, for thy eager spirit, when the gods showed thee signal bounty! How thy hopes surged within thy heart, when thy lady's favouring look gave promise of the bliss of wedlock! Thou didst seem to tread the sky and walk among the shining heavens. Less exultant was the shepherd on Amyclae's sand when Helen came to the ships of Ida; less eager seemed Peleus to Thessalian Tempe, when Chiron high on his horse's body looked forth and beheld Thetis draw nigh to the Haemonian strand. How tardy are the lingering stars! how slow is Aurora to a lover's prayer!

But when the son of Leto, sire of poets, and Euhan, Semele's son, perceived from afar that Stella's marriage-chamber was preparing, from Ortygia the one, from Nysa the other they set their swift companies in train. To Apollo the Lycian hills and cool resorts of shady Thymbra sound responsive, and thou, Parnassus; Pangaea and Ismara re-echo Bacchus, and the shores of Naxos, once his bridal bower. Then did they enter the doors they loved, and brought to their tuneful friend their gifts of lyre and quill, of dappled yellow

fawnskin and mystic wands: the one adorns the poet's brow with bay, the other sets a Minoan crown upon his hair.

Scarce is the light of day sent forth, and already the omens of a happy union are at hand, already either house is aglow with festal pomp. The doorposts are green with foliage, the cross-roads bright with flame, and the most populous part of immeasurable Rome rejoices. No office of State, no train of lictors but seeks that threshold; Senators' robes are jostled by crowds of common folk; yonder are knights, and women's gowns that mix and struggle in a throng of youths. Each they call happy, but more among the multitude envy the bridegroom. Long since leaning against the portal hath Hymen sought to utter a new song in honour of their marriage, and to gladden the poet's heart. Juno brings the holy bonds, and Concord marks the union with twofold torch. Such was that day: of the night let the bridegroom sing! This only may we know: 'twas thus that Ilia, bride of Mars, o'ercome by deceitful slumber, laid her side on the river's bank; less fair was Lavinia when she tinged her snow-white cheeks and blushed 'neath the eyes of Turnus; not so did Claudia turn to meet the people's gaze, when the ship moved and her maidenhood was sure.

Now, comrades of the Aonian sisters and ministers of the tripods, now must we strive in manifold measures: send forth the inspired train, chapleted and ivy-crowned, each bard in the strength of his own exultant lyre. But above all, ye who spoil of its last pace your noble rhyme, bring songs that are worthy of the marriage feast. Philetas himself with Cos to applaud him and old Callimachus and Propertius in his Umbrian grot would fain have praised this day, and Naso too right gladly e'en in Tomi, and Tibullus by the glowing hearth that was his wealth.

For my part, verily, 'tis no one love, no single impulse that makes me sing: thou, Stella, hast a Muse like to and closely joined with mine, at similar altars do we feel the poet's rage, and together draw water from the springs of song. Thee, lady, at thy birth my own Parthenope a first fostered in her bosom, and in thy infancy thou wert the glory and delight of my native soil. Let the Euboean land be exalted to the starry pole, and Sebethos swell with pride of his fair nursling; nor let the Lucrine Naiads boast more of their sulphur

caves, nor Pompeian Sarnus in his sweet repose.

Come now, hasten ye to bestow on Latium noble sons who will make her laws and rule her armies, and practise poesy. May merciful Cynthia hasten the tenth month for the bringing-forth but spare her, Lucina, I pray thee: and thou, O babe, spare thy mother, hurt not her tender womb and swelling breasts; and when Nature in secrecy has marked thy features, much beauty mayst thou draw from thy father, but more from thy mother. And thou, loveliest of Italian maids, won at last by a husband worthy of thee, cherish the bonds he sought so long; so may thy beauty suffer no loss, and the fresh prime of youth abide for many a year upon thy brow, and that comeliness be slow to age.

III. THE VILLA OF MANILIUS VOPISCUS AT TIBUR

Munilius Vopiscus is mentioned in the Preface to this book; he was a man of literary tastes, and an Epicurean (I. 94). The villa was probably above Tibur; Volpi found remains that he said tallied with Statius's description ("Vêtus Latium profanum," x p. 330, 1701), but no trace of it has endured to modern times.

If anyone has been privileged to behold eloquent Vopiscus' cool retreat at Tibur and the double dwelling threaded by Anio's stream, or to see the friendly intercourse of bank with bank, and each villa striving to keep their master to itself, on him the hot star of Sirius has not barked, nor leafy Nemea's offspring *a* looked with fierce aspect; such icy coolness is in the house, so pitilessly does the cold break the sun's power, nor does the dwelling swelter in Pisa's summer heat.

Pleasure herself with her own delicate hand <is said> to have traced with thee... Then Venus poured Idalian perfumes upon the roof-tops and caressed them with her hair, and left a winsome charm upon the house and bade her winged sons abide there for ever.

O ever memorable day! What raptures of the mind, what cloying of the sight by countless marvels do I recall! How kindly the temper of the soil! How beautiful beyond human art the enchanted scene! Nowhere has Nature more lavishly spent her skill. Lofty woods lean over rushing waters; a false image counterfeits the foliage, and the reflection dances unbroken over the long waves. Anio himself — marvellous to believe — though full of boulders below and above, here silences his swollen rage and foamy din, as if afraid to disturb the Pierian days and music-haunted slumbers of tranquil Vopiscus. On either shore is home, and that most gentle river parts thee not in twain. Stately buildings guard either bank, and complain not that they are strange to each other, or that the stream bars approach. Now let Fame boast of the Sestian gulf, and the bold youth who swam the sea and outstripped the dolphins! Here is eternal quiet, storms have here no power, waters ne'er grow angry. Here can one see and talk, ay all but join hands across the stream. Thus do the ebbing waves repel Chaleis, thus the curve of Bruttian shore that the deep has

sundered regards Sicanian Pelorus.

What shall be my first, what my middle theme, whereon shall I conclude? Shall I marvel at the gilded beams, the Moorish lintels on every side, patterned veins of glittering marbles, the water-nymphs that hie them through every bed-chamber? This way my eyes, that way my mind would snatch me. Shall I tell of the forest's venerable age? Of the courtyard which sees the river's lower reaches, or of that other which looks back towards the mute woodland, where it hath quiet unbroken and the silence of night unmarred by any storm, and murmuring sounds that invite to gentle slumber? Or of the smoking baths upraised on the grassy bank and the fire kindled upon the icy flood? Or where the river, chained to the vaporous furnace, laughs at the nymphs that gasp in its stream hard by?

Works of art I saw and masterpieces of the ancients and metals that lived in manifold forms. A labour is it to tell of the shapes of gold, the ivories and the gems worthy to adorn a finger, and of all that the artist's hand first playfully wrought in silver or smaller bronze, and made trial of huge colossal forms. While I wandered gazing and cast my eyes on all, I was treading on riches unaware. For the radiance down-streaming from on high and the tiles that reflected the brilliant light displayed to me the floor, where the ground rejoices in manifold skill of painting, and with strange shapes surpasses the Unswept Pavement: awe held my steps.

Why should I now marvel at the central buildings, or at the outer wings each with its upper story? why at thee, preserved in the very heart of the house, thou tree that risest up through roof and roof-beam to the pure air above, and under any other lord wouldest endure the cruel axe? Even now, though thou knowest it not, some lissome Naiad or Hamadryad perchance doth owe to thee the life that no stroke has severed.

Why should I tell of feasts held now on this bank, now on that, of white-gleaming pools and springs deep-hidden 'neath the flood, or of thee, O Marcia, that glidest athwart the river's depths and in bold lead dost cross its channels? Shall only the river of Elis come safe by an unsalt path to Aetna's haven beneath Ionian waves? There Anio himself, leaving his grotto and his spring, in night's mysterious hour puts off his grey-green raiment and leans his breast against the soft

moss hereabouts, or plunges in all his bulk into the pools and swimming splashes among the glassy waters. In that shade Tiburnus reclines, there Albula would fain dip her sulphurous tresses; this bower could steal woodland Phoebe from Egeria and empty cold Taygetus of Dryad choirs, and summon Pan from the Lyccan glades. Ay, did not the Tirynthian shrine as well give oracles, even the Sisters of Praeneste might change their abode. Why should I belaud the twice-bearing apple-orchards of Alcinous and the boughs that never stretched unladen to the air? Let the domain of Telegonus give place and Turnus' Laurentian fields, and the Lucrine dwellings and the shore of cruel Antiphates; let the perfidious height of glassy Circe yield, where the Dulichian wolves once howled, and Anxur's haughty towers and the home that the kind old nurse owes to her Phrygian foster-child; let the shores of Antium give place, which when the suns are narrowed in their path and winter's storms are come will call thee to them.

Ay, here that serious mind broods on weighty themes; here silence shrouds a fruitful quiet and grave virtue tranquil-browed, sane elegance and comfort that is not luxury, such as the Gargettian sage had himself preferred and left his own Athens and his garden behind him; these were worth seeing despite Aegean storms and the Hyades' snowy constellation and the Olenian star, even though the bark must be thrown on Malea's mercy and the way lie through Sicilian surges: why do men look slightly on pleasure near at hand? Here thy lyre delights the Fauns of Tibur and Aleides himself and Catillus, sung of by a mightier harp, whether thou hast a mind to strive with the Pindaric quill or dost lift thy lyre to the height of heroic deeds or stirrest up the black venom of thy bitter satire, or whether thy letters glow and sparkle, composed with no less skill.

O worthy of the wealth of Midas and of Croesus and of Persian treasure, all blessing on thy wealth of soul, thou o'er whose watered fields Hermus should have flowed with yellow channel and Tagus with his shining sand! So mayst thou full oft enjoy thy learned leisure, I pray, so with heart unclouded mayst thou outpass the limits of old Nestor's age!

IV. TO RUTILIUS GALLICUS, ON HIS RECOVERY FROM ILLNESS

“Soteria” means a thanksgiving for recovery from sickness (as here), nr for rescue from any serious danger. Here Statius congratulates Rutilius Gallicus, a man of noble rank and military distinction, who after seeing service in Asia Minor and Pannonia had become successively Praetor, Governor of the province of Asia, Consul, Imperial Commissioner in Africa, and finally Prefect of the City; between the last two offices he had fought on the Rhine. The recovery is effected by divine agency, Apollo and Aesculapius visiting the patient and tending him themselves.

Hurrah! ye exist then, ye gods, nor is Clotho's spinning inexorable; kindly Astraea hath regard for pious folk, and comes back reconciled with Jove, and Gallieus beholds the stars he doubted e'er to see again. Beloved of heaven art thou, divine Germanicus, who can deny it? Fortune was ashamed to rob thy empire of so great a minister. Those shoulders with their immense burden rise once more next to thine, and have east off the ruinous doom of old and revive more vigorous yet for many a year. Therefore let the brisk cohorts that venerate the City's eagles, and the laws that oftentimes take refuge in thy bosom, complaining of the courts' confusion, and the cities of the toga wheresoe'er they be, that with far-travelling pleas implore thy justice — let them vie in their rejoicing, and let our own hill duly join its shouts to theirs, and the mutterings of ill report be silent. For he abides, and long will abide in his new span of life, in whose merciful hand is placed the guardianship of fearless Rome. No such grave reproach will the new age lay upon the fates, nor will the altar of Tarentum, late restored, so deeply sin.

But I will call neither on Phoebus, although my quill is mute without him, nor on the Aonian goddesses with Pallas the tenth Muse, nor on the gentle sons of Tegea and of Direce: come thou thyself and bring new strength and spirit, thou that art my theme; for not without genius heaven-sent wert thou so mighty to shed great glory upon the Ausonian gown and to give judgement and

understanding to the Hundred. Though god-possessed Pimplea shut out the thirsty bard and conspiring Pirene be not granted me, yet dearer are the lavish draughts snatched from the flood of thy own fountain, whether thou dost create free and flowing prose or whether thy sweet eloquence is broken in to rules of art and obeys our laws. Wherefore come — if we make return to Ceres of her gifts and to Lyaeus of his wine, and if Diana though rich in booty yet receives spoils in every temple and the Lord of War our trophies of the fight — and spurn not, Gallicus, since thou hast a mightier utterance and aboundest in wealth of speech sublime, spurn not the worship of a humbler lyre. The wandering moon is ringed with stars, and lesser streams run down into the Ocean.

What rich reward for thy virtues did the City's loving anxiety give thee! What famous Senators and Knights, what champions of the obscure multitude saw I then in tears! The prosperous Curia feared not so when Numa was failing, nor the noble Knights at Pompey's danger nor the women at Brutus' death. And this is the cause thereof: thou wert loth to hear the sullen chains, didst spare the scourge nor go as lofty office bade thee, but didst renounce much of thy armed force, and deign to regard the petitions of the lowly and their humble prayers; thou broughtest back justice to the Forum nor didst vex the curule magistrates, but temperedst force by law. So is a way won to the deep places of the heart, so doth reverence trust the love wherewith it mingles. Terrible too to all was the dire severity of Fate and the impetuous violence of the sudden peril, as the mischief tarried not. 'Twas not the fault of thy age — scarce had that begun to withdraw from its twelfth lustre — but of straining toil and a strong mind's mastery o'er the body and unsleeping diligence in thy Emperor's cause, a labour of love to thee. Hence came creeping deep into the weary limbs a treacherous quiet and dull forgetfulness of life.

Then the god who hard by the peaks of the Alpine ridge "sets his sacred name of Apollo upon the groves, turns to behold, long alas! neglectful of so precious a ward. Then cutting short delay: "Come with me on the instant, Epidaurian son," he cries, "away, and gladly too. 'Tis in our power — the chance must be seized! — to restore to health a mighty hero. Let us advance and grasp the thread that e'en

now the distaff stretches. Fear no dread thunderbolt: Jupiter will be the first to praise this skill of ours. For 'tis no plebeian life I save nor one unblest in its begetting. Briefly while we draw nigh his house will I unfold his story. Himself he gives pedigree to his line, and reflects thereon his own nobility; yet his origin is not obscure, but surpassed by the glory that follows it, and gladly gives place to its famous progeny. He too first excelled in the arts of peace: in eloquence brilliant and powerful; then loyal to his oath he served in East and West and under every sun, bearing the brunt of countless camps, nor was he suffered to relax his ardour in peaceful ease nor to ungird his sword. Him did Galatia dare to provoke to war in lusty pride — ay, and me also — and for the space of nine harvests Pamphylia feared him, and the bold Pannonian and Armenia's dire retreating bowmen and Araxes that now brooks a Roman bridge. Why should I tell of the double command and the twice repeated governorship of Asia? who thrice and four times would fain have him for herself, but our Annals and the higher curule chair, oft promised, call him back. Why extol the tribute and wondrous obedience of Libya, and the spoils of triumph sent to Rome from the midst of peace, and such wealth as not even he who gave the charge had dared to expect? Trasimene and the Alps exult and the ghosts of Cannae; and the mangled shade of Regulus first appears and claims its glorious reward. Time allows not to recount the armies of the North and rebellious Rhine and the prayers of captive Velleda, and, latest and greatest glory. Rome given thee in charge, when the Dacians were falling before us and thou wert chosen, Gallieus, to take up the reins of so great a chief, and Fortune marvelled not.

Him then, if my words find favour, we will rescue, my son, from Pluto's cruelty. This is the prayer of the illustrious Father of the Latian City, and he has deserved it; for not in vain of late did ye sing my praise, ye boys, clad in patrician purple. If there be any herb in twy-formed Chiron's health-giving cave, all that Trojan Pergamus stores for thee in thy shrine or blest Epidaurus nurtures in her healing sands, all the aid of flowering dittany that Crete brings forth in the glens of Ida, the abundant spume of serpents — <these bring>, and I will join thereto my skill of hand, and every kindly juice that. I learned in Arabia's balmy fields, or gathered as a shepherd in the

meadows of Amphrysus.”

He ended; they find the sufferer lying languid and battling for life each girds himself in Paeonian wise, and willingly both teach and both obey, until with varied art of healing they have shattered the deadly plague and dispersed the dire cloud of baneful lethargy. He himself aids the heavenly ones, and prevailing o’er the utmost power of the disease anticipated the help they bring. Not more swiftly was Telephus restored by Haemonian skill, nor the cruel wounds of which Atrides stood in terror stanchd by Machaon’s healing balm.

What place, amid such a gathering of Senators and people, for anxious prayers of mine? Yet I call the high stars to witness, and thee, Thymbraean sire of bards, what terror held me night and day while I clung to the portals and in unremitting vigilance caught every hint with eye or ear: just as a tiny skiff trailing behind a mighty vessel, when the tempest rages, bears its small share of the waters’ fury and is tossed in the self-same gale.

Twine now, ye Sisters, joyfully twine your threads of shining white! Let none reckon the measure of life already spent: this day is the birthday of life to be. Thou dost deserve to outlast the age-long lives of Troy, the Euboean Sibyl’s dust and Nestor’s mouldering decay. What censer of mine can avail, needy as I am, to supplicate for thee? Not if Mevania should empty her valleys or the fields of Clitumnus vouchsafed their snow-white bulls, were Priam or Tithonus, as in ii. 3. 73, v. 3. 256. that sufficient. Yet amid such offerings a simple turf, some meal and a humble salt-cellar have ofttimes pleased the gods.

V. THE BATHS OF CLAUDIUS ETRUSCUS

The Baths of Claudius Etruscus were possibly on the Quirinal; they are mentioned by Martial (vi i-2). For their owner see note to Silv iii. 3.

Not at Helicon's gates doth my harp resound in fierce, ecstatic melody, nor call I on the heavenly Muses, so often wearied by my prayer; thou Phoebus, and thou, Euan, art released from my choral song, and do thou, swift Tegean, keep in mute silence thy tuneful tortoise-shell: other choirs doth my song demand. 'Tis enough to lure the Naiads hither, queens of the *wave*, and the lord of the flashing fire, weary still and glowing with the Sicilian anvil's heat. Thebes, lay down thy sinful arms awhile: I would fain make, revel for a friend I love. Cup after cup, lad! — nay, trouble not to count them! Tune the tardy lyre! Toil and Care, avaunt! while I sing of the baths that sparkle with bright marbles, and while my Clio, wantoning in ivy chaplets and free from the sober laurel, makes sport for Etruscus. Come then, ye Nymphs of the waters, turn hither your clear countenances and bind up your glass-green tresses with tender vine-shoots, your bodies all unclothed as when ye emerge from the deep springs and torture your Satyr-lovers with the sight. You, who with guilt have defamed the honour of the streams, I care not to solicit: far hence remove thou, O Salmacis, with thy deceiving fount, and the river of Cebrenis left forlorn, that grief made dry, and the ravisher of Hercules' young ward! But ye Nymphs who dwell in Latium and on the Seven Heights and make Thybris swell with your fresh waters, ye whom headlong Anio delights and the Maiden destined to welcome the swimmer, and Marcia that brings down the Marsian snow and cold, ye whose travelling waves flood through the lofty masonry and are carried high in air over countless arches — yours is the work I fain would sing, yours the home whereof my gentle verse doth tell. Never in other grottos dwelt ye more sumptuously. Cytherea herself guided her lord's hand, and taught him skill; and that no baser flame might scorch the furnace, herself she kindled the brands of her winged Loves thereunder. Neither Thasos nor wave-lashed Carystos

are suffered here; far off the onyx mourns, and the serpent-stone rejected makes complaint; only the porphyry gleams, hewn from the Nomads' tawny rocks, only that which in the hollow caves of Phrygian Synnas Attis bedewed with the bright drops of his own blood, and the snow-white cliffs that Tyre and Sidon quarry. Scarce is there space for stone from the Eurotas, where the long line of green picks out the marble of Synnas. The doorways yield not in splendour, the ceilings are radiant, the gables glitter with mosaics of pictured life. The very fire is astounded at the riches he encompasses, and tempers the fierceness of his sway. Everywhere is flooding light, where the sun pierces the roof with all his rays, and, spite of all his fierceness, is scorched by a heat that is not his own. Nought is common there, nowhere will you mark bronze of Temcse, but from silver is the glad wave poured and into silver it falls, and marvelling at its own beauty stands poised upon the gleaming brim and refuses to go its way. But the dark-blue stream without, running gaily between snow-white banks, all clear to sec from lowest depth to surface — whom would it not tempt to throw off his lazy robe and plunge into the water? From these deeps had Cytherea chosen to be born; here. Narcissus, hadst thou seen thyself more clearly: here would swift Hecate fain bathe, e'en though discovered. Why now should I tell of the floors laid upon the earth, destined to hear the noise of balls, where languidly creeps the warmth about the house and a scant haze rolls upward from the furnaces below? Such beauty would no guest despise, though fresh from the shore of Baiae, nor, if I may compare great things with small, would one who had bathed of late in Nero's baths refuse to sweat here once more. A blessing, Claudius, on thy brilliant cleverness and careful thought! may this work grow old with thee, and thy fortune learn to rise to a new and more glorious birth.

VI. THE KALENDS OF DECEMBER

An account of an entertainment given by the Emperor to the people during the Saturnalia. Suetonius (Domit. 4) mentions also chariot-races, sham fights, naval battles in the Amphitheatre, combats of gladiators, beasts, etc., and various distributions of money and food to the people.

Hence, father Phoebus and stern Pallas! Away, ye Muses, go, keep holiday; we will call you back at the New Year. But Saturn, slip your fetters and come hither, and December tipsy with much wine, and laughing Mirth and wanton Wit, while I recount the glad festival of our merry Caesar and the banquet's drunken revel.

Scarce was the new dawn stirring, when already sweetmeats were raining from the line, such was the dew the rising East wind was scattering; the famous fruit of Pontic nut-groves, or of Idume's fertile slopes, all that devout Damascus grows upon its boughs or thirsty Caunus ripens, falls in a generous profusion. Biscuits and melting pastries, Amerian fruit not over-ripe, must-cakes, and bursting dates from invisible palms were showering down.

Not with such torrents do stormy Hyades o'erwhelm the earth or Pleiades dissolved in rain, as the hail that from a sunny sky lashed the people in the theatre of Rome. Let Jupiter send his tempests through the world and threaten the broad fields, while our own Jove sends us showers like these!

But lo! another multitude, handsome and well-dressed, as numerous as that upon the benches, makes its way along all the rows. Some carry baskets of bread and white napkins and more luxurious fare; others serve languorous wine in abundant measure; so many cupbearers of Ida would you think them. Thou dost nourish alike the circle of the noble and austere and the folk that wear the toga, and since, O generous lord, thou dost feed so many multitudes, haughty Annona knoweth nought of this festival. Come now, Antiquity, compare with ours the age of primeval Jove and the times of gold: less bounteously then did the vintage flow, not thus did the harvest

anticipate the tardy year. One table serves every class alike, children, women, people, knights, and senators: freedom has loosed the bonds of awe. Nay even thyself — what god could have such leisure, or vouchsafe as much? — thou didst come and share our banquet. And now everyone, be he rich or poor, boasts himself the Emperor's guest.

Amid such excitements and strange luxuries the pleasure of the scene flies quickly by: women untrained to the sword take their stand, daring, how recklessly, men's battles! you would think Thermodon's bands *a* were furiously fighting by Tanais or barbarous Phasis. Then comes a bold array of dwarfs, whose term of growth abruptly ended has bound them once for all into a knotted lump. They give and suffer wounds, and threaten death — with fists how tiny! Father Mars and Bloodstained Valour laugh, and cranes, waiting to swoop on scattered booty, marvel at the fiercer pugilists.

Now as the shades of night draw on, what commotion attends the scattering of largess! Here enter maidens easily bought; here is recognized all that in theatres wins favour or applause for skill or beauty. Here a crowd of buxom Lydian girls are clapping hands, here tinkle the cymbals of Cadiz, there troops of Syrians are making uproar, there are theatre-folk and they who barter common sulphur for broken glass.

Amid the tumult dense clouds of birds swoop suddenly down through the air, birds from holy Nile and frost-bound Phasis, birds that Numidians capture 'neath the dripping South. Too few are there to seize them all exultantly they grasp their fill and ever clutch fresh plunder. Countless voices are raised to heaven, acclaiming the Emperor's festival; with loving enthusiasm they salute their Lord. This liberty alone did Caesar forbid them.

Scarce was dusky night shrouding the world, when through the dense gloom a ball of flame fell gleaming into the arena's midst, surpassing the brightness of the Gnosian crown. The sky was ablaze with fire, and suffered not the reign of darkness: sluggish Quiet fled, and lazy Sleep betook himself to other cities at the sight. Who can sing of the spectacle, the unrestrained mirth, the banqueting, the unbought feast, the lavish streams of wine? Ah! now I faint, and drunken with thy liquor drag myself at last to sleep.

For how many years shall this festival abide! Never shall age
destroy so holy a day! While the hills of Latium remain and father
Tiber, while thy Rome stands and the Capitol thou hast restored to
the world, it shall continue.

BOOK II.

STATIUS TO HIS FRIEND MELIOR: GREETING!

NOT only our friendship wherein I take such pleasure, my excellent Melior who are as faultless in your literary judgement as in every phase of life, but also the actual circumstances of the poems I am presenting to you are responsible for the whole of this book of mine being directed towards you, even without an introductory letter. For its first subject is our beloved Glaucias, whose charming infancy — a charm so often bestowed on the unfortunate — is lost to you now; I loved him when I took him in my arms at your house. While that wound was yet fresh, I wrote as you know a poem of consolation, with such dispatch that I felt my promptness owed an apology to your feelings. Nor am I boasting of it now to you who know, but warning others not to criticize too sharply a poem written in distress and sent to one in sorrow, seeing that sympathy must be timely or else superfluous. The Surrentine Villa of my friend Pollio which follows should have been written with greater care if only in honour of his eloquent tongue, but he has displayed a friend's indulgence. Certainly the trifling pieces on your tree, Melior, and on the parrot were as you know dashed off like epigrams. A like facility of pen was demanded by the Tame Lion, for had I not presented him to His Most Sacred Majesty while still lying in the amphitheatre, all the effect would have been missed. Then there is the consolatory piece I wrote on the loss of his slave-boy for our friend Ursus, a youth of blameless life and an accomplished poet, who wastes no time in idleness; I was glad to include it in this book, quite apart from the debt I owe to him, for he will credit you with the honour he derives therefrom. The volume is concluded by the Birthday Ode to Lucan, for which Polla Argentaria, rarest of wives, desired to be held accountable, when *we* happened to be considering the celebration of the day. I could not show a deeper reverence for so great a poet than by distrusting my own hexameters when about to sing his praises. These pieces, my excellent Melior, such as they are, if you like them, give them to the world: if not, let them return to me..

I. GLAUCIAS, THE FAVOURITE OF ATEDIUS MELIOR

In this and the following Epicedia Statius shows the influence both of philosophic consolation such as we see it in Seneca, or the Consolatio ad Liviam, and also of the rhetorical schools with their ἐπιτάφιοι and παραμυθητικοί, divided, into regular parts, such as Praise of the departed, description of the illness and death, description of the burial, welcome of the soul of the dead one in the under-world, etc. Statius's treatment is free, as in the Epithalamium; mythological allusion is frequent, and was undoubtedly part of the poetic convention of the time, and therefore should not be condemned as frigid and implying a lack of true feeling. The reader may compare earlier poems of the same kind, e g. Horace, C. i. 24; Propertius, iii. 18, iv. 11; Ovid, Am iii. 9. Two poems of Martial (vi. 28, 29) were also written on the same occasion.

How can I begin to console thee, Melior, for thy foster-son untimely taken? How can I heartlessly sing before the pyre, while the ashes are still aglow? The lamentable wound gapes wide with sundered veins, and the dangerous path of the great gash lies open. Even while I relentlessly compose my spells and healing words, thou dost prefer to beat the breast and cry aloud, and hatest my lyre and turnest away with deaf ear. Untimely is my song: sooner would a despoiled lioness or tigress robbed of her cubs give ear to me. Not if the triple chant of the Sicilian maidens were wafted hither, or the harp that beasts and woodlands understood, would they soothe thy distracted wailing. Demented Grief hath his stand in thy heart; at a touch thy breast heaves and sobs.

Have thy fill of bitterness: none forbids thee. Overcome, by giving it rein, the malady of thy distress. At last is thy luxury of weeping sated? At last art thou wearied out and deignest to hear a friend's entreaty? Now shall I sing? Lo! even in my mouth my song is choked with sobs, the words are blotted by falling tears. For I myself led forth with thee the solemn line of sable mourners and the boyish bier, a crime for the City to behold; I saw the cruel heaps of incense

doomed to destruction and the soul wailing above its own corpse; thee too, as thou didst break through sobbing fathers and mothers that would stay thee, and didst embrace the pyre and prepare to swallow the flames, could I scarce restrain, thy comrade in like case, and offended by restraining. And now, alas! a bard of evil, my fillets unbound and the glory departed from my brow, I reverse my lyre and beat my breast with thee; but be assuaged, I pray thee, and suffer me as partner of thy mourning, if I have so deserved and shared thy sorrow. In the very hour of calamity fathers have heard my voice; by the very pyre have I sung solace to prostrate mothers and loving children — ay, to myself also, when swooning beside kindred flames I mourned, O Nature, what a father! Nor do I sternly forbid thee to lament; nay, let us mingle our tears and weep together.

Long have I sought distractedly, beloved boy, a worthy approach and prelude to thy praises. Here thy boyhood, standing on life's threshold, calls me, there thy beauty, there a modesty beyond thy years and honour and probity too ripe for thy tender age. Ah! where is that fair complexion flushed by the glow of health, those starry orbs whose glance is radiant with heaven's light, where the chaste composure of that low "brow, the artless curls above and the soft line of lovely hair? Where is the mouth that prattled with fond complainings, those kisses redolent, as he clung, of vernal blossoms, his tears mingled with smiles, and his accents steeped in Hybla's honey? A serpent would hush its hissing and cruel stepdames be fain to do his bidding. Nothing false do I add to his true beauty. Alas! that milk-white throat! those arms that were ever about his master's neck! Where now is that not far distant hope of coming manhood, the longed-for glory of his cheeks, that beard that thou oft didst swear by? The remorseless hour and Time the enemy have swept all to ashes: to us is left but to remember. Who will beguile thy thoughts with the merry chatter thou didst love? who will allay thy cares and brooding mind? Who will appease thee when incensed with angry passion and storming at the serving-folk, and divert thee from thy fury to himself? Who, when the feast is begun and the wine poured out, will snatch it away e'en from thy lips and confound all things in delightful rapine? Who will climb on thy couch in the morning and whisper thee awake, and clasping thee tight delay thy going, and

from the very gate recall thee to his kisses? Who will be the first to meet thee on thy return, and leap to thy kiss and thy embrace, and put his tiny arms about thy shoulders? Mute is the house, I vow, and lonely the hearth; desolation is in the chambers and a drear silence at the board.

What wonder if thy good foster-father honours thee with so grand a funeral? thou wert to thy lord the peaceful haven of his old age, thou wert now his delight, now the sweet object of his care. No outlandish revolving stage *a* turned thee about, no slave-boy wert thou amid Egyptian wares, to utter studied jests and well-conned speeches, and by impudent tricks to seek and slowly win a master. Here was thy home, here wast thou born, both thy parents have long been loved in their master's house, and for thy joy were they freed, lest thou shouldst complain of thy birth. Nay, no sooner wert thou taken from the womb, when thy lord exultantly raised thee, and as thy first cry greeted the shining stars appointed thee for his own and held thee close in his bosom and deemed himself thy sire. May the sanctities of parents forgive my words, and do thou suffer me, O Nature, to whom it is given to hallow the earliest ties between soul and soul throughout the world: bonds of blood and lineage are not all; often do alien or adopted children creep further into our hearts than our own kindred. Of necessity we beget sons, of our pleasure do we choose them. Thus by his winning ways the half-beast Chiron supplanted Haemonian Peleus in young Achilles' favour. Nor did the aged Peleus accompany his son to the fight at Troy, but 'twas Phoenix that stirred not from his pupil's side. Far off Evander prayed for Pallas' victorious return, but faithful Acoetes watched the combat. And when his sire for idleness came not from the shining stars, wave-wandering Dictys tended the winged Perseus. Why should I speak of mothers surpassed in their affection by foster-nurses? Why of thee, O Bacchus, who when a treacherous doom had washed in the wooden chest, "*volucrum*" refers to the winged sandals given him by Hermes to fight Medusa. laid thy mother in ashes nestled more securely in Ino's bosom? And when Ilia, fearing her sire no more, reigned a queen in Tuscan waters, Romulus was burdening Acca's arms. I have seen myself shoots grafted on another tree grow higher than their own. And already had thy will and

purpose, Melior made thee his sire, though not yet his charm and goodness; nevertheless thou didst love the words even now mingled with his utterance, and his rude infant cries and tears.

He, like a flower that is doomed to perish at the first breath of the South wind, yet with reckless daring lifts high its head in the lush meadow, young as he was had early surpassed his peers in pride of step and countenance, and had far outstripped his years. Did he stand with limbs bent in the locked wrestling-bout, you would have deemed him born of an Amyclaeon mother; Apollo would soon have exchanged for him the son of Oebalus, Alcides had bartered Hylas; if in Grecian dress he declaimed the Attic speech of fluent Menander, Thalia Mould have rejoiced and praised his accents, and in wanton mood have disordered his comely locks with a rosy garland: or if he recited the old Maeonian and the toils of Troy, or the mishaps and slow returning of Ulysses, his very father, his very teachers were amazed at his understanding. Truly did Lachesis touch his cradle with ill-omened hand, and Envy clasped the babe and held him in her bosom: the one fondled his cheeks and luxuriant curls, the other taught him his skill and inspired those words over which we now make moan. His rising years, though infancy still was near, had begun to draw level with the toils of Hercules; yet already was he firm of stride, and his height outstripped his dress, and the garments seemed to shrink upon the lad, for what garments, what apparel did not thy kindly lord hasten to procure thee? He constrained not thy breast in a narrow tunic, nor cramped thy shoulders in a straitening cloak; nor did he drape thee in large, ill-fitting folds, but ever suiting the raiment to thy years now garbed thee in scarlet, now in grass-green clothing, now in the soft blush of purple, or rejoiced to kindle the flash of gems upon thy fingers; unfailing was thy attendant train, unfailing were his gifts; the bordered robe alone was lacking to thy modest beauty.

Such was the fortune of that house. Suddenly Fate lifted her hand to strike. Wherefore, O goddess, dost thou banefully unsheathe those cruel talons? Doth not his beauty move thee, or his piteous tender age? Fierce Procne would not have had the heart to rend him for her lord, nor would the savage Colchian have persisted in her cruel ire, even though he had been the son of Aeolian Creusa; from him would

grim Athamas have turned aside his maddened bow; Ulysses though hating Hector's ashes and Troy full sore would have wept to hurl him from the Phrygian towers. 'Tis the seventh day, and already those eyes are dull and cold, and Juno of the underworld hath clasped him and seized in her hand the lock of hair. Yet he, though the Fates press hard upon his frail life, beholds thee with his dying vision and murmurs thy name with faltering tongue; to thee he gasps out the last breath from his exhausted frame, thee alone he remembers, thy cry alone he hears, for thee his lips are moved and his last words spoken, as he bids thee not to mourn and consoles thy grief. Yet we thank thee, O Fate, that no lingering death devoured his boyish charm as he lay, that he went inviolate to the shades, just as he was, without touch of harm upon his body.

Why should I tell of the funeral rites, the gifts flung prodigally to the flames, the melancholy pomp of the blazing pyre? How thou didst heap the purples high on the sad pile, how Cilician blooms and gifts of Indian herbs, and juices of Arabia and Palestine and Egypt steeped the hair that was to burn? Fain would Melior bring all without stinting, and consume whole fortunes in loathing of his wealth laid desolate; but the grudging fire avails not, and the puny flames are too few to burn the gifts. Awe lays hold upon my heart. O Melior, once so calm, how distraught wert thou in that deadly hour beside the pyre, how I feared thee! Was that the merry, kindly face we knew? Whence that frenzy, those merciless hands, those spasms of wild grief as thou liest prostrate on the ground shunning the cruel light, or fiercely tearest thy clothes and bosom, straining the dear face to thee and kissing the cold lips? The father and sorrowing mother of the dead one were there, but on thee they gazed awe-stricken — what wonder? All the people mourned the deadly blow, and crowds escorted thee on the Flaminian road across the Mulvian bridge, while an innocent child is given over to the angry flames, and both by his age and by his beauty wins their tears. Such was Palaemon, when his mother flung herself on him as he lay shipwrecked and cast up from the sea in the Isthmian haven; such too Opheltis, whom the serpent tore as he played in the snake-haunted grass of Lerna, when the greedy fire consumed him.

But lay aside thy fears, and be no more in dread of threatening

Death: Cerberus with triple jaws will not bark at him, no Sister will terrify him with flames and towering hydras; nay, even the grim sailor of the greedy boat will draw nearer to the barren shores and fire-scorched bank, that the boy's embarking may be easy.

What message brings the son of Cyllene, waving a glad wand? Can there be aught of joy in so terrible a time? Well did the lad know the likeness and lofty countenance of noble Blaesns, for often had he seen thee at home twining fresh garlands and pressing that image to thy breast. And when he recognized him among the Ansonian nobles and the lineage of Quirinus pacing the shores of Lethe's stream, he silently drew near and first walked beside him timidly and plucked at his garment's edge, then followed him more boldly, for as he more boldly plucked the other spurned him not, but thought him an unknown scion of his house. Soon when he knew that the boy was the darling and favourite of a friend so rare, the solace for his lost Blaesus, he raised him from the ground and fastened him about his mighty shoulders, and a long while carried him rejoicing upon his arm, and offered him such gifts as kindly Elysium bears, sterile boughs and songless birds and pale flowers with bruised blossoms. Nor does he forbid him to remember thee, but fondly blends heart with heart, and takes part in turn in the affection of the lad.

It is the end: he is lost to thee. Wilt thou not now assuage thy pain and lift thy grief-sunken head? All that thou seest is dead or doomed to die; nights and days perish, and the stars, nor does the frame of the solid earth avail her. Our race is of mortal kind, and who should bewail the passing of folk whose end is sure? War claims some, the ocean others; some are victims of love, of madness, or fell desire; these winter's freezing breath awaits, those the fierce heat of deadly Sirius, others pale Autumn with rain-bringing jaws. All that hath had beginning fears its end. Doomed are we all, ay, doomed: for shades innumerable doth Aeacus shake his urn. But he whom we mourn is happy: gods and men hath he escaped, and doubtful chance and the dangers of our dark life: he is beyond the will of Fate. He prayed not, nor feared nor deserved to die; but we, poor anxious creatures miserable folk, we know not whence our death shall come, what our life's end shall be, from what quarter the thunderbolt threatens, what cloud utters the sound of doom. Do these thoughts not move thee?

But thou shalt be moved, and willingly. Come hither, Glaucias, who alone canst obtain all thou dost ask; leave that dark threshold, for neither the ferryman nor the comrade of the cruel beast bars the way to innocent souls; soothe thou his heart and forbid his tears to flow; make his nights glad with thy sweet converse and thy living countenance. Tell him thou art not dead, and hasten to commend to him — for thou canst — thy unhappy parents and thy sister left forlorn.

II. THE VILLA OF POLLIUS FELIX AT SURRENTUM

The general arrangement of the poem follows the lines of i. 3; there is a description of the villa and its surroundings, followed by praise of its master, Pollius, and, in this case, of his wife Polla as well. Pollius Felix was a wealthy patron of Statius. The position of the villa can be determined with some degree of certainty as having been on the coast between the Capo di Sorrento and the Capo di Massa, on the heights of the Punta della Calcarella; just to the south the Marina di Puolo still preserves the name of Pollius, and must be the "unum litus" of ll. 15, 16; the temples of Neptune and Hercules lay somewhere below the villa. Considerable remains of Roman masonry still exist.

The building of the Temple of Hercules is described in Silv iii. 1.

Between the wails that are known by the Sirens' name and the cliff that is burdened by the shrine of Etruscan Minerva a lofty villa stands and gazes out upon the Dicarchean deep; there the ground is beloved of Bromius, and the grapes ripen on the high hills nor envy the Falernian wine-pressess. Hither was I glad to come after the four-yearly festival of my home, — when at last deep quiet had fallen and the dust lay white upon the course, and the athletes had turned them to Ambracian garlands, — drawn by the eloquence of gentle Pollius and bright Polla's girlish charm to cross my native strait: though already fain to direct my steps where runs the worn and well-known track of Appia, queen of the long roads.

Yet the time I spent delighted me. The crescent waters of a tranquil bay break through the curving line of cliff on either hand. The spot is of Nature's giving: one single beach lies between sea and hill, ending towards the land in overhanging rocks. The first charm of the place is a smoking bath-house with two cupolas, and a stream of fresh water from the land meeting the salt brine. Here would the nimble choir of Phorcus wish to bathe, and Cymodoce with dripping tresses and sea-green Galatea. Before the building the dark-blue ruler of the swelling waves keeps watch, and guards that innocent home;

his shrine is it that is wet with friendly spray. Alcides protects the happy fields; in the two deities does the haven rejoice: one guards the land, the other resists the angry billows. A wondrous peace is on the sea: here the weary waves rage no more, and the furious South wind blows more mildly; here the swift hurricane is less daring, and the pools lie tranquil and undisturbed, calm as the spirit of their lord.

Thence a colonnade climbs slantwise up the cliff, vast as a city, and its long line of roof gains mastery over the rugged rocks. Where the sun once shone through clouds of dust, and the way was wild and unlovely, now it is a pleasure to go. Even such, should you scale the lofty height of Bacchic Ephyre, is the covered way that leads from Lechaëum, of Ino's fame.

Not if Helicon were to grant me all her streams, or Pimplea quench my thirst, or the hoof of the flying steed abundantly assuage it: not if mystic Phemonoë were to unlock her pure springs or those wherein my Pollius, under the auspices of Phoebus, hath plunged his deep-immersed urn — not even so could I equal in Pierian strains the countless charms and beauties of the place. Scarcely could my eyes sustain the long array, scarce could my feet avail, while I — was led from scene to scene. What a multitude of things! Shall I first admire the genius of the place or of its master? This part of the house looks eastward to Phoebus' morning rays; that part detains him as he sets, nor allows the exhausted light to disappear, when the day is wearied out and the shadow of the dark mountain falls on the waters, and the proud mansion floats upon the glassy flood. Here the sound of the sea is in the chambers, here they know not the roaring of the waves, but prefer the silence of the land. Here are spots that Nature has favoured, here she has been outdone and given way to the settler and learnt gentleness in ways unknown before. Here, where you now see level ground, was a hill; the halls you enter were wild country; where now tall groves appear, there was once not even soil: its owner has tamed the place, and as he shaped and conquered the rocks the earth gladly gave way before him. See how the cliff learns to bear the yoke, how the dwellings force their entry and the mountain is bidden withdraw. Now let the skill of Methymne's bard and that sole Theban lyre and the glory of the Getic quill give way before thee: thou too dost move the rocks, thee too the high woods follow.

Why should I tell of ancient forms in wax or bronze, or of aught that the colours of Apelles rejoiced to animate, or the hand of Phidias carved, though Pisa still was empty, yet wondrously withal, or what was bidden live by Myron's art or Polycletus' chisel, the bronzes, from the funeral fire of Corinth, more precious than gold, countenances of chieftains and prophets and sages of old time, whom it is thy care to follow, whose influence thou dost feel in all thy being, untroubled and steadfast in thy tranquil virtue, and ever lord of thy own heart? Why should I — recount the numberless summits and the changing views? Each chamber has its own delight, its own particular sea, and across the expanse of Nereus each window commands a different landscape: this one beholds Inarime, from that rugged Prochyta is seen; here the squire of mighty Hector is outspread, there sea-girt Nesis breathes tainted air; yonder is Euploea, good omen for wandering barks, and Megalia flung out to repel the curving billows; and thy own Limon grieves that his lord reclines there over against him, and gazes at thy Surrentine mansion from afar. Yet one room there is, one higher than all the rest, which over a straight track of sea brings Parthenope to thy sight: here are marbles chosen from the heart of Grecian quarries; the stone of Eastern Syene, splashed with veining, and that which Phrygian axes hew in mournful Synnas o'er the fields of wailing Cybele, whereon the white expanse is bordered by a rim of purple; here too are green blocks quarried from the hill of Lycurgus at Amyclae, where the stone counterfeits the grass; here gleam the tawny rocks from Numidia, Thasian marble too and Chian, and Carystian stone that joys to behold the waves: all turn to salute the Chalcidian towers. A blessing on thy heart, that thou approvest what is Greek and hauntest Grecian land; nor let the city of Dicarchus that gave thee birth feel envy! We shall prove better owners of our poet-ward.

Why should I rehearse the wealth of the countryside, the fallows flung out into the sea and the cliffs steeped in Bacchus' nectar? Often in autumn-time when the grapes are ripening a Nereid climbs the rocks, and under cover of the shades of night brushes the sea-water from her eyes with a leafy vine-spray, and snatches sweet clusters from the hills. Often is the vintage sprinkled by the neighbouring foam; Satyrs plunge into the water, and Pan-gods from the mountain

are fain to grasp the sea-nymph as she flies naked through the waves.

Bless with prosperity, O land, thy lord and lady both, unto the years of a Nestor or a Tithonus, nor ever change thy noble servitude! Let not the Tirynthian hall and Dicarchus' bay outdo thee as a home, nor thy lords too often gladden the wistful vineyards of Laconian Galaesus. Here where Pollius plies his Pierian craft, whether he ponders the places (Naples and its surroundings). "We," *i e* we of Naples, as opposed to Putcoli.

Gargettian teacher's counsels, or strikes my own lyre, or reunites unequal strains, or draws the threatening sword of avenging satire: the nimble Siren speeds from these rocks to sweeter lays than hers, and here Tritonia lifts her head and listens. Then the wild winds abate, the seas themselves are forbidden to rage; the dolphins emerge from the deep, and drawn to the music of his harp float gently by the cliffs.

Long mayst thou live, enriched beyond Midas' wealth and Lydian gold, blest above the diadems of Euphrates and of Troy; whom neither fickle power nor the shifting mob, nor laws nor camps can vex, whose great heart, raised sublime over all desire, doth quell hope and fear, who art beyond the will of Fate and dost baffle the enmity of Fortune; thee the last day shall find, not bewildered in the maze of things, but sated with life and ready to depart. But we, a worthless folk, slaves at the beck of transient blessings and wishes ever new, are tossed from chance to chance: thou from thy mind's high citadel dost look down upon our wanderings and laughest at human joys. There was a time when the loyalty of two lands tore thee in twain, and thou wert borne in triumph through two cities, there worshipped, as is meet, by Dicarchus' folk, here made their own by mine, and bountiful alike to these and those, in the full fire of youth and proud of thy wandering Muse. But now are the mists dispersed, and thou dost behold the truth — others in their turn are tossed upon that sea — and thy unshaken bark has entered a peaceful haven and a quiet resting-place. Continue thus, nor ever loose thy vessel, her voyage over, to face our storms. And thou, who in wisdom dost surpass the daughters of Latium and in mind art equal to thy lord, whose spirit no cares, whose brow no menace has dismayed, but who art ever bright and happy, while joy untroubled reigns in thy

countenance: — for thee no churlish money-chest keeps tight grip of hoarded wealth, no waste of greedy usury tortures thy heart, but open to all are thy riches, and thou dost enjoy them in wise restraint. No union of souls is more blest, such are the minds that Concord has taught. Learn of her in untroubled peace, ye from whose hearts the blending fires are met in a long union, and whose hallowed love keeps fast the laws of chaste affection. Go onward through the years, and outdo the centuries of old and the title-roll of ancient fame.

III. THE TREE OF ATEDIUS MELIOR

Atedius Melior, another of Statius's rich patrons, had a plane-tree in his grounds that grew beside a pool, with a trunk that bent over and down towards the water, and then straightening itself grew upwards again; Statius's poem is a kind of Alexandrian αἰτιον, giving the cause of the phenomenon, and reminds one also of an Ovidian Metamorphosis. It was sent to Melior as a birthday gift.

Enfolding with its overshadowing boughs the clear waters of my elegant Melior's lake there stands a tree, whose trunk, curving from its base, bends down toward the mere, and then shoots up aloft straight to its summit, as though it grew a second time from the midst of the waves, and dwelt with hidden roots in the glassy stream. Why ask so slight a tale of Phoebus? Do you, O Naiads, relate the cause, and you, compliant Fauns — ye will suffice — inspire my song.

Frightened troops of Nymphs were fleeing from Pan; on he came, as though all were his quarry, yet on Pholoe alone was he bent. By copse and stream she fled, shunning now the hairy following limbs, now the wanton horns. Through Janus' grove, scene of battles, and Cacus' deadly haunts; through the fields of Quirinus she came running a-tiptoe and gained the Caelian wilds; there at last wearied out and fordone with fear — where to-day stands the quiet home of hospitable Melior — she gathered her saffron robe closer about her, and sank down on the edge of the snow-white bank. Swiftly follows the shepherd-god, and deems the maid his bride; already he allays the panting of his fevered breast, already he hovers lightly o'er his prey. Lo! with speedy steps Diana approaches, as she ranges the seven hills and tracks the flight of a deer on Aventine; the goddess was vexed to see it, and turning to her trusty comrades: "Shall I never keep this unseemly, wanton brood from lustful rapine? Must my chaste band of followers ever grow fewer?" So speaking she drew a short shaft from her quiver, but sped it not from the bent bow or with the wonted twang, but was content to fling it with one hand, and touched — so 'tis said — the left hand of the drowsy Naiad with the arrow-feathers. She awaking beheld at once the day and her wanton

foe, and lest she should bare her snow-white limbs plunged just as she was with all her raiment into the lake, and at the bottom of the mere, believing Pan was following, she wrapped the weeds about her. What could the robber do, so suddenly baffled? Conscious of his shaggy hide, and from childhood untaught to swim, he dares not trust himself to the deep waters. Lavish complaint made he of heartless Bromius, of the jealous lake and jealous shaft; then spying a young plane tree with long stem and countless branches and summit aspiring to heaven he set it by him and heaped fresh sand about it and sprinkled it with the longed-for waters, and thus commanded it: "Live long, O tree, as the memorable token of my vow, and do thou at least stoop down and cherish the secret abode of this hard-hearted nymph, and cover her waters with thy leaves. Let her not, I pray, though she has deserved it, be scorched by the sun's heat or lashed by cruel hail; only mind thou to bestrew the pool with thickly scattered leaves. Then will I long remember thee and the mistress of this kindly place, and guard both to a secure old age, so that the trees of Jove and Phoebus, and the twy-coloured poplar shade and my own pines may marvel at thy boughs." So he spake; and the tree, quickened with the old passion of the god, hangs and broods over the full mere with drooping stem, and searches the waves with loving shadows, and hopes for their embrace; but the breath of the waters put it from them, and suffered not its touch. At length it struggles upward, and poised upon its base cunningly lifts its head without any knot, as though it sank with another root into the bottom of the lake. Now not even the Naiad, Phoebe's votary, hates it, but her stream invites the boughs she banished.

Such is the gift I bring thee on thy birthday, small indeed, but destined perchance to live throughout long ages. Thou in whose tranquil breast dwells courteous dignity and gay, yet thoughtful virtue, refusest slothful ease and unjust power and overweening ambition, but takest the mid-path between duty and pleasure, thou whose loyalty is unstained, whose heart has known no storms, whose life is lived apart, yet ordered and planned for all to see, thou who readily spurnest gold, yet dost excel in setting thy wealth in array and bringing thy riches to the light: long mayst thou flourish and live on in youthfulness of mind and heart to rival Priam and Tithonus, and to

surpass the years that thy mother and thy sire took with them to Elysium; this guerdon have they won for thee from the stern Sisters, they and the lofty fame of great-hearted Blaesus, which, preserved from silent oblivion by thy witness, shall flourish once again.

IV. MELIOR'S PARROT

This elegy on Melior's parrot recalls of course Ovid's similar poem (Am ii. 6), while it is also a kind of parody of Statius's own Epicedia. For talking birds in ancient times, Pliny, Nat. Hist x. 117, is the locus classicus.

Parrot, prince of birds, glib-tongued favourite of thy master, parrot that cleverly dost mimic human speech, who has cut short thy chatter by so sudden a stroke? Yesterday, hapless one, thou didst join our feast, though doomed to die, and we saw thee plucking the dainties of the table and moving from couch to couch till after midnight. Greetings also and well-conned words hadst thou repeated. But now that minstrelsy hath Lethe's eternal silence for its portion. Let the well-known tale of Phaethon give place: 'tis not only swans that sing their coming death.

But how spacious was thy house, how bright its gleaming dome! and the row of silver bars, joined with ivory, and the gate that echoed shrill at the touch of thy beak, and the doors that to-day speak their own complaint! Empty is that happy cage, and silent the chattering of that lordly abode.

Flock hither all ye scholar fowl, to whom Nature has given the noble privilege of speech; let the bird of Phoebus beat his breast, and the starling, that repeats by heart the sayings it has heard, and magpies transformed in the Aonian contest, and the partridge, that joins and reiterates the words it echoes, and the sister that laments forlorn in her Bistonian bower: mourn all together and bear your dead kinsman to the flames, and learn all of you this piteous dirge:

"The parrot, glory and renown of all the airy tribe, green monarch of the East, is dead: whom neither the bird of Juno with jewelled tail, nor the fowl of icy Phasis, nor those whereon the Numidians prey beneath the moist southern sky, could surpass in beauty. Once he saluted kings and spoke the name of Caesar, was now a sympathetic friend, now a gay companion of the board, so skilful was he to render the words he had been taught! Never wert thou solitary, beloved Melior, when he was set free. But not ingloriously is he sent to the

shades: his ashes are rich with Assyrian balm, and the frail feathers breathe incense of Arabia and Sicanian saffron; and he will mount a fragrant pyre, a happier Phoenix, free from the weary languor of old age.”

V. THE TAME LION

Tame lions are the subject of epigrams by Martial (i. 6, 14, 22, 48, etc.). For the circumstances of the writing of this piece see Preface to this book.

What now has it availed thee to quell thy rage and be tamed, to unlearn crime and human slaughter from thy heart, and endure dominion and obey a lesser lord? To have been wont to leave thy cage and return again to imprisonment, and of thy own will yield up the captured prey, to open thy jaws and let go the inserted hand? Thou art fallen, O skilled slayer of tall beasts, not caught within the enclosing circle of a Massylian hunting-band, nor flinging thyself with dreaded spring against the spears, nor deceived by the hidden yawning of a pit, but overcome by a beast that fled thee. The unlucky cage stands open, while behind their barriers all around the quiet lions grew wrathful that so great a wrong should have been suffered. Then all their crests fell, and shame came on them to see the corpse brought back, and they drew down all their brows upon their eyes. Yet when the first stroke o'erthrew thee the unwonted shame o'erwhelmed thee not: thy valour remained, and even in the hour of death thy brave spirit rallied as thou didst fall, nor did all thy fierceness straightway own defeat. Just as the dying warrior who knows his wound is mortal yet goes against the foe, and lifts his hand to strike, and threatens even while the weapon falls from his grasp; so he with laboured step and reft of his wonted pride steadies his eyes as with open mouth he pants for breath and for the foe.

Great solace, nevertheless, shall be thine, poor victim, for thy sudden fate, that people and Senate mourned in sorrow to see thee die, as though thou wert some favourite gladiator fallen on the deadly sand; that amid so many beasts of Scythia and Libya, from the banks of Rhine and the tribes of Egypt, beasts so cheaply slain, the loss of one lion alone drew a tear from mighty Caesar's eye.

VI. A POEM OF CONSOLATION TO FLAVIUS URSUS ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE SLAVE

This Epicedion follows the same lines as ii. 1, except that the opening is different. Flavius Ursus, we may gather from the Preface and this poem, was young and rich, and practised at the bar.

Too cruel thou, whoever thou art, who makest distinctions in mourning, and settest bounds to grief! Piteous it is for a parent to burn — ah! fearful thought! — an infant darling or growing son; hard too is it when a consort is snatched away to call the name of the partner of the deserted couch; sad are a sister's tears and a brother's groans: yet deeply also, ay deeper far does a stroke less deadly probe the feelings, surpassing mightier blows. 'Tis a slave — for thus doth Fortune confound with undiscerning hand the names of things, nor sees into the heart — a slave whom thou dost mourn, but one that was loyal, one whose faithful affection merited these tears, and whose spirit knew a freedom that no line of ancestry could give. Check not thy weeping, feel no shame; let that day of thy lament know no restraining, if the Fates are so cruel— 'tis a man thou bewailest, Ursus, — alas! myself I fan thy sorrow! — a man who was thine own, ready to find service sweet, never sullen, eager to give orders to himself. Who would curb the grief that bursts forth at such a death? The Parthian laments his steed slain in the fight, the Molossians their trusty hounds, even birds have had their pyres, and the hind its Maro. What if he were no real slave? Myself I saw and marked his bearing, how he would have thee only for his lord; but nobler yet was the spirit in his face, and breeding showed clear in his youthful blood. Eagerly would Grecian and Latin dames desire and pray that such a son were theirs. Less comely was proud Theseus, when the cunning maid of Crete drew him back with her anxious thread, or Paris, when in haste to see his Spartan bride he launched, a shepherd lad, the unwilling pines upon the main. 'Tis truth I tell, nor does wonted licence sway my song: I have seen him, ay, and see him

yet, outmatching Achilles when Thetis hid him singing of wars upon the maiden's strand, or Troilus, when the lance from the Haemonian hero's arm caught him as he fled round cruel Phoebus' walls. How fair thou wert! lo! comelier far than all, lads and men alike, and surpassed only by thy lord! His glory alone exceeded thine, as the bright moon exceeds the lesser fires, and as Hesper outshines the other stars. No womanly charm was in thy countenance, no effeminate grace upon thy brow, as with those whom after the reproach of fading beauty men bid lose their sex, but an earnest, manly beauty was thine; nor was thy gaze insolent, but thine eye was gentle yet stern with fire, like Parthenopacus to behold, when now decked in his helm; simple the ruffled charm of thy locks, thy cheeks not covered yet, but bright with their first down: such are the lads that Eurotas nurtures by Leda's stream, such the boys that in the unstained freshness of boyhood go to Elis, and approve their budding youth to Jove. How indeed in song can I trace the growth of modesty in his young mind, of his calm steadiness of character and a spirit riper than his years? Often would he chide his willing lord, and aid him with deep and zealous counsel; he shared thy joys and sorrows, nor ever lived to himself, but guided his looks by thy countenance; worthy was he to exceed in fame the Haemonian Pylades and the Athenians' loyalty; but let not his praise o'erstep his fortune: not more faithfully did Eumaeus, sick at heart, long for the return of tardy Ulysses.

What god, what chance makes choice of wounds so deadly? whence are the Fates so unerring in their power to harm? Ah! how much braver, Ursus, hadst thou been, stripped of thy wealth and goodly fortune! if in smoking ruin rich Locri had belched forth Vesuvian fire, or rivers had submerged thy Pollentian glades, if Lucanian Acir or impetuous Tiber had swung their swollen waters to the right, thou hadst endured the will of heaven with unruffled brow; or if bounteous Crete and Cyrene had forsworn thee and denied their harvests, or wherever lavish Fortune returns to thee with plenteous bosom. But ill-omened Envy, skilled to hurt, saw the vital spot and the path of harm. Just at the gate of full-grown life that most beauteous of youths was striving to link three years to three Elean lustres. With grim frown the stern Rhamnusian gave heed, and first

she filled out his muscles and set a brilliance in his eyes and raised his head higher than of wont; deadly alas! to the poor lad were her favours: she tortured herself with envy at the sight, and clasping the sufferer struck death into him by her embrace, and with hooked, relentless fingers tore that pure countenance. Scarce was Phosphor at the fifth rising saddling his dewy steed: already, Philetus, wert thou beholding the bleak shore of heartless Charon and heartless Acheron, bewailed how bitterly by thy lord! Not more fiercely would thy mother, had she lived, blackened and bruised her arms for thee in lamentation, nor thy father either; verily thy brother who saw thy funeral blushed to be outdone. No servile flames were thine: fragrant harvests of Saba and Cilicia did the fire consume, and cinnamon stolen from the Pharian bird, and the juices that drip from Assyrian herbs — and thy master's tears: these only did the ashes drink, those the pyre ceased not to consume; nor was the Setian wine that quenched the hoary ash, nor the smooth onyx that guarded his bones more grateful to the hapless shade than those tears. Yet can even tears avail him? Why, Ursus, do we surrender to our sorrow? Why dost thou cherish thy loss, and perversely love thy wound? Where is that eloquence that prisoners dragged to judgement knew? Why dost thou vex that dear shade by savage shows of grief? Peerless of soul was he and worthy to be mourned: but thou hast paid that debt, and he is entering the company of the blest and enjoys Elysian peace, and perchance finds there famous ancestors; or haply by the pleasant silences of Lethe Nymphs of Avernus mingle and sport around him, and Proserpine notes him with sidelong glance. Mourn then no more, I pray thee; the Fates, and he himself perhaps, will give thee another Philetus, and gladly he will show him seemly ways and fashions, and teach him a love to match his own.

VII. AN ODE TO POLLA IN HONOUR OF LUCAN'S BIRTHDAY

The title Genethliacon was usually applied to an ode written in honour of a living person. This ode, however, is a commemoration of Lucan after his death, addressed to Polla, his widow. Into it is introduced a prophecy of his fame spoken by Calliope on the day of his birth.

Come to Lucan's birthday-feast, all ye who on the hills of Isthmian Dione, with hearts fired by poetic frenzy, drink of the spring that the flying hoof struck forth. Ye who have the privilege of song in your keeping, Arcadian discoverer of the vocal lyre, and thou, Euhæan, whirler of thy Bassarids, and Pæan and the Hyantian Sisters, joyfully deck yourselves anew with purple fillets, make your tresses trim and let fresh ivy enwreath your shining raiment. Flow more abundantly, poetic streams, and be more brightly green, ye woodlands of Aonia and if anywhere your shade hath opened and taken in the sunlight, let soft garlands fill the room. Let a hundred fragrant altars stand in the Thespian d' groves, and a hundred victims that Dirce laves and Cithæron pastures: 'tis of Lucan we sing, keep holy silence; this is your day, ye Muses, keep silence, while he who made you glorious in two arts, in the measures of fettered speech and free, is honoured as the high priest of the Roman choir.

Happy land — too happy alas! — and blest, that on the verge of Ocean's waves beholdest Hyperion slope downward to his setting, and hearest the hiss of plunging wheels; even thou, Bactica, whose dripping olive-presses vie with Athens, that is fertile for Tritonis: thou canst account mankind in debt to thee for Lucan! This is more than to have given Seneca to the world, or to have borne the sweet-tongued Gallio. Let Bactis, more renowned than Grecian Meles, flow backward and be exalted to the stars; Mantua, dare not to challenge Bactis!

Straightway, while yet a new-born babe he crawled and with earliest accents sweetly whimpered, Calliope took him to her loving bosom. Then first did she lay aside her grief and cease her long

lament for Orpheus, and said: "O boy, consecrate to poesy, soon destined to outmatch the bards of old, thou shalt move no rivers or wild herds or Thracian ash-trees with thy music, but with eloquent song shalt draw after thee the seven hills and Martian Tiber and the learned knights and purple Senate. Let others follow the tracks that poets' wheels have worn, the night of Phrygia's overthrow, Ulysses' slow returning path, Minerva's daring vessel: thou, dear to Latium and mindful of thy race, more boldly dost unsheathe a Roman epic. And first, while in tender youth, thou shalt practise thy pen on Hector and the chariots of Thessaly and king Priam's suppliant gold, and shalt unlock the abodes of hell; ungrateful Nero and my own Orpheus shall be set forth by thee to favouring theatres. Thou shalt tell how the impious fires of the guilty monarch ranged the heights of Remus. Then by a charming address thou shalt bestow fame and glory upon chaste Polla. Thereafter more generous in ripened manhood thou shalt thunderously rehearse Philippi, white with Italian bones, and Pharsalian wars, and Cato, grave champion of Freedom, blasted amidst the arms of the divine chief, and Magnus, favourite of the people. Thou shalt shed reverent tears for the crime of Pelusian Canopus, and raise to Pompey a memorial loftier than bloodstained Pharos. These lays shalt thou sing as a youth in early prime, before the age at which Virgil wrote his *Gnat*. The untutored Muse of bold Ennius shall give way to thine, and the towering frenzy of learned Lucretius, he too who led the Argonauts through the narrow seas, and he who changes bodies from their former shapes. What greater praise can I give? the *Aeneid* itself, as thou singest to Roman folk, shall do thee homage. Nor will I give thee splendour of song alone, but with the torches of wedlock *a* will bestow on thee a poetess suited to thy genius, for beauty, simplicity, graciousness, wealth, lineage, charm, and loveliness worthy of kindly Venus' or of Juno's giving, and myself will chant before your gate the festal marriage-hymn. Alas! ye Fates, too stern and cruel! Alas! that the highest never long endure! Why are lofty things most prone to fall? Why by a cruel chance doth greatness ne'er grow old? Even so is the son of the Nasamonian Thunderer, whose lightning Hashed from rising to setting sun, confined in a narrow tomb at Babylon. Even so did Thetis swoon to see Pelides fall, pierced by the hand of coward

Paris. Even so did I upon the banks of murmuring Hebrus follow the head of Orpheus not mute in death. Even so on thee — ah! the impious frenzied tyrant! — bidden while singing of battles and with lofty utterance solacing the mighty dead to plunge in Lethe's rushing stream — O crime, O most foul crime! — on thee too shall silence fall." She spoke, and with shining quill brushed away her lightly-falling tears.

But thou, whether uplifted in the soaring chariot of fame through the whirling vault of heaven, whither rise more puissant souls, thou lookest down upon the earth and laughest at sepulchres; or whether on Elysian shores that thy deserts have won thee thou hast gained the blissful bower of peace, where the heroes of Pharsalus forgather, and as thy noble lay resounds a Pompey or a Cato bears thee company; or whether a mighty shade, inviolable and proud, thou visitest Tartarus and hearest afar the stripes of the guilty and beholdest Nero pale at the sight of his mother's torch: be present in shining splendour, and, since Polla calls thee, gain one day, I beg, from the gods of the silent world: open is that door to husbands returning to their brides. She clothes thee not in the shape of an unreal deity, in the wantonness of lying revels, but worships thy very self and has communion with thee in her being's inmost depths, and wins but empty solace from thy countenance which carved to thy likeness in gold shines above her couch and broods over her untroubled slumbers. Depart far hence, ye Deaths: here is the well-spring of sustaining life. Let stubborn sorrow have an end, and tears of happiness now fall, and the mourning of solemn grief be turned to adoration.

BOOK III

STATIUS TO HIS FRIEND POLLIUS: GREETING!

To you at least, my clearest Pollius, than whom none is more worthy of that tranquillity to which you cling so faithfully, to you at least I need not justify at great length the boldness of my verses, for you know that many of them came suddenly to birth under your protecting care, and often have you been alarmed at the audacity of my pen, when in the intimacy of your genius I have ventured deep into the secluded realm of letters, and have been led by you through all the winding ways of poesy.

And so it is without fear that I send you this third volume of my *Impromptu* verses. For while you lent your witness to the second, to this you have given the authority of your name. For its gates are unbarred by the Surrentine Hercules, to which, when I had seen it after its dedication on your shore, I at once paid my tribute in these lines. Then comes a poem, which, when my charming and distinguished friend, Maecius Celer, was ordered by our sacred Emperor to the Syrian front, since I could not follow him, I sent to attend him on his way. The devotion of my dear Claudius Etruscus also deserved some solace from my pen when in real grief — and how rare that is! — he was mourning for his aged father. Next Earinus, freedman of our prince Germanicus — you know how long I have put off the Emperor's expressed desire that I should write some verses in honour of his tresses, which he was sending to Asclepius at Pergamum together with a mirror and a jewelled box. Finally there is the piece in which I entreat my wife Claudia to retire with me to Naples. This, to tell the truth, is just talk, quite unreserved, from a husband to a wife, and that would persuade rather than delight. You will particularly favour this poem, since you will know that you above all are the object of my proposed retreat, and that my retirement is not so much to my own country as to yourself. Farewell.

I. THE TEMPLE OF HERCULES BUILT BY POLLIUS FELIX AT SURRENTUM

The poem describes how Pollius built a more worthy temple for Hercules in the neighbourhood of his villa; the god himself gave assistance, and the work was finished with miraculous speed. The piece ends with praise of Pollius, put into the mouth of the grateful deity.

Pollius renews thy interrupted rites, O lord of Tiryns, and makes clear the causes of a year's neglect, seeing that now thou art worshipped beneath a mightier dome, and no longer hast a beggarly home on the naked shore, a shanty where wandering mariners can lodge, but shining portals and towers upheld by Grecian marbles, as though purified by the brands of ennobling fire thou hadst a second time ascended heavenward from Oeta's flames. Scarce can sight or memory be trusted. Art thou verily that inglorious warden of a gateless threshold and a puny altar? Whence hath the rustic Alcides this new court and this unwonted splendour? Gods have their destinies and places also! What swift devotion! Here of late could be seen but barren sands, a wave-beaten mountain-side, and boulders rough with scrub, and cliffs that would scarce admit a foothold. What sudden fortune has embellished these stark crags? Did those walls rise to Tyrian music or to the Getic harp? "The year itself marvels at the toil, and the months in their twelvefold orbit are amazed to see the work of ages. 'Twas the god that brought and uplifted his own towers, and by might and main moved the resisting boulders, and with huge breast drove back the mountain; you would have thought his cruel stepdame bade him.

Come then, whether free at last from thralldom thou dwellest in thy ancestral Argos, and spurnest Eurystheus in his grave, or whether the throne of thy father Jove and the stars thy valour Avon thee are thy abode, and Hebe with robe upgirt, more charming than the banished Phrygian lad, hands thee the draught of blissful nectar: hither come, and bring thy presence to the new-born shrine. No harmful Lerna calls thee, nor the acres of poor Molorchus nor

Nemea's dreaded field, nor Thracian caves nor the polluted altars of the Pharian prince, but a blest and innocent home that knows naught of evil fraud, an abode most worthy of a divine guest. Lay aside thy ruthless bow and thy quiver's cruel horde and the club that plenteous blood of kings hath stained; cast off the foe that is spread upon thy stalwart shoulders: here are high-piled cushions for thee, embroidered with acanthus in purple line, and a lofty couch all rough with ivory carving. Come in a peaceable and gentle spirit, not turbulent with wrath nor suspicious like a slave, but in such mood as when Auge the Maenalian maid detained thee, worn out with revel and drenched with thy brother's wine, or when Thespius, the father of thy many brides, marvelled at thee after the reproach of that roving night. Here hast thou a festal playing-ground, where ungloved youths in innocent rivalry perform the yearly, swift-recurring contests. Here on thy temple is written thy priest's name to the joy of his grandsire: small is he yet, and like to thee when with thy hand thou didst quell the first monsters of thy stepdame and weep that they were slain.

But come, august Calliope, tell how the sudden shrine arose; Alcides will bear thee company with ringing voice, and twang his bowstring to imitate thy strains.

'Twas the season when the vault of heaven bends its most scorching heat upon the earth, and the Dog-star smitten by Hyperion's full might pitilessly burns the panting fields. And now the day had come, when the torch-smoke rises from Trivia's grove at Aricia, refuge of the runaways who reign there, and the lights twinkle on the lake that knew the secret of Hippolytus; Diana herself sets garlands on her faithful hounds, and polishes her darts and lets the wild beasts go free, while at its virtuous hearths all Italy celebrates the Ides of Hecate. But I, although beneath Dardanian Alba's hills an estate of my own and a rivulet that runs for me by the grace of our great prince sufficed to soothe my cares and to allay the summer heat, was making the rocks of the Sirens and the home of eloquent Pollius my abode, no stranger there, and zealously gaining knowledge of his peaceful soul and studying the new Pierian blooms of his innocent Muse. It chanced that, while we were spending Trivia's day upon the watery shore, and discontented with narrow

doors and wonted house were sheltering from the sun 'neath the foliage of a spreading tree, the sky was hid, the bright light gave place to sudden cloud and the faint breeze changed to a heavy downpour from the south; such a storm as Saturnia brought upon Libya, while wealthy Elissa was given to her Ilian lover and the witnessing Nymphs shrieked in the pathless glades. Helter-skelter we fly, and the slaves snatch up the festal banquet and wreathed goblets; nor was there any refuge for the guests, though countless houses were planted on the happy fields above, and the mountain glittered with a wealth of towers: but the lowering clouds and the assurance that the fair weather, though ruined, would return, urged us to seek the nearest shelter. There stood a mean shanty bearing the name of a sacred shrine, that confined the great Alcides within its humble walls, scarce large enough to house sea-wandering mariners and searchers of the deep. Hither all the crowd of us gather, hither throng the band of slaves with the costly couches and the feast, and all the pleasant household of elegant Polla. The doors would not contain us, the narrow shrine lacked room.

The god blushed, and laughing stoic into the heart of his beloved Pollius, and with caressing arms embraced his friend: "Art thou," said he, "that lavisher of wealth, who with generous heart hast filled full alike the dwellings of Dicarcheus and youthful Parthenope? who on my own mount hast set so many towers, so many verdant groves, so many lifelike marbles and bronzes, and waxen forms that the glow of colour animates? For what was that house of thine, that country before it rejoiced in thee? Thou didst clothe bare rock with a long pathway, and where before was but a track, now stands a lofty colonnade with painted pillars, that the road might be seemly. Upon the curving strand thou didst imprison heated waters 'neath cupolas twain. Scarce can I number all thy works: and to me alone is Pollius needy and in want? yet even such a shrine I enter cheerfully, and love the shore thou openest to me. But Juno hard by scorns my dwelling, and laughs silently at my shrine. Give me a temple and an altar worthy of thy endeavours, an altar such as no vessel would fain neglect though speeding with prosperous sail, one to which the ethereal Sire and the guests of heavenly banquets and my sister invited from her lofty shrine might come. Nor be dismayed that a

mass of stark, malignant mountain doth confront thee, which unnumbered ages have not worn away; I will myself be present to aid so great an enterprise, and will break through the flinty bowels of the unwilling earth. Begin, and dare the task, trusting in Hercules' encouragement.

Amphion's towers will not have risen more swiftly, nor the toilsome walls of Troy." He spoke, and went from out his heart.

Without delay the design is sketched and the plan shaped. Innumerable workers gather: some have the task of felling trees or planing beams, others sink the foundations in the soil. Moist clay is baked to protect against storm and to keep out frost, and untamed limestone is melted in the round furnace. But the chief labour is to cleave by might and main the opposing rock and the boulders that resist the steel. Hereupon the patron of the place, the Tirynthian himself, lays by his arms and sweats at the work, and himself with strong axe hews at the shapeless mass, when the lowering sky is veiled by the shades of night. Rich Caprae and green Taurubulae resound, and the mighty echo of the sea returns again to the land. Not so loud is Aetna's din, when the anvils are busy and Brontes and Steropes ply the hammer, nor greater the noise from the Lemnian eaves when Mulciber amid his flames forges the aegis and makes chaste gifts for Pallas. The cliffs diminish, and the workmen returning in the rosy dawn marvel at the achievement. Scarce has a second panting summer come, when the Tirynthian enriched by a mighty dome looks down upon the waves and challenges his stepdame's neighbouring abode, and invites Pallas to a temple worthy of her. Already the peaceful trumpets give the signal, already the sand smokes and burns with the valiant contests. Such honours would neither Pisaeon Jove nor the sire of leafy Cirrha spurn. No sadness is here: let tearful Isthmos and cruel Nemea give place; a luckier infant here makes sacrifice. The very Nymphs of the green waters leap forth unbidden from their pumice caves; they cling to the streaming rocks nor think shame to gaze unseen on the naked wrestlers. Gaurus too beholds them with its grove of Icarian vines, and the wood that crowns the peak of Nesis set fast in ocean, and calm Limon and Euploea of good omen for ships and the Lucrine Venus; thou too, Misenus, from thy Phrygian height shalt learn the

Grecian trumpet-calls, while Parthenope smiles with kindly heart upon the ceremonies of her race and the naked bouts of youths and the humble garlands that imitate her own.

Come now thyself, and graciously deign to honour the feats of thine own festival with thy invincible might: whether it please thee to cleave the clouds with the discus, or with thy shaft to outstrip the speedy Zephyrs, or to lock fast thy arms in a Libyan wrestle, grant our rites this boon, and, if thou hast still the apples of the Hesperides, place them in the lap of venerable Polla; for she is worthy to take them, and will not dishonour so great a gift. Nay, might she but recover the charm and beauty of her youth — forgive me, Alcides — perchance for here thou hadst even spun the wool.

Such is the offering I have brought in joyful revelry to the new-born shrine. Lo! now he himself upon the threshold — I see him opening his mouth and speaking: “A blessing on thy spirit and thy wealth, wherewith thou hast imitated my own labours, who canst tame the rugged rocks and the abhorred wastes of barren nature, and turnest to thy use the wild beasts’ lairs, and bringest forth my godhead from shameful hiding! What reward shall I now give thee for thy merits? How show my gratitude? I will hold fast the threads of the Fates and stretch out the wool upon their distaffs — I can subdue remorseless Death — I will bid sorrow flee and suffer not sad loss to harm thee, and I will renew thee in a green old age untouched by time, and grant thee long to behold thy growing grandchildren, until the one is ripe for a bride and the other for a husband, and from them a new progeny springs, and a merry band now clambers about their grandsire’s shoulders, now run in eager and loving rivalry for the kisses of tranquil Polla. To this shrine shall no term of age be set, so long as the fabric of the flaming sky shall carry me. Not in Nemea or ancient Argos shall I more often dwell, or in my home at Tibur or in Gades, resting-place of the sun.” So he speaks, and touching the fire that rose upon the altar and nodding his temples white with poplar-leaves he swore by Styx and by the thunderbolt of his ethereal sire.

II. A SEND-OFF POEM TO MAECIUS CELER

The Propempticon or valedictory poem seems to have been one of the regular types of poem for which rules were laid down in the schools of rhetoric, Horace, C. i. 3, Epod. 1, Tibullus, i. 3. may be called Propemptica, cf also the song in Theocritus, Id. 7. Nothing more is known of Maecius, except that he was consul suffectus in 101.

Ye Gods whose delight it is to preserve adventurous ships, and to assuage the angry perils of the gusty sea, make the waters smooth and calm, and listen in peaceful council to my entreaties, and let the waves be gentle nor make uproar as I pray: "Great and rare, O Neptune, is the pledge I commit unto thy deep; young Maecius is entrusted to the doubtful main, and is about to take across the seas the dearer half of my soul. Bring forth your favouring stars, Oebalian brethren, and sit upon the twin horns of the yard-arm; let your light illumine sea and sky; drive far away, I pray, your Ilian sister's tempestuous star, and banish her wholly from the heavens. And ye too, Nereids, sea-blue horde of ocean, to whom the glory and the fortune of the second realm have fallen by lot — suffer me to call you stars of the mighty deep! — arise from the glassy caverns of foam-encompassed Doris, and in peaceful rivalry swim round the bays of Baiae and the shores where the hot springs abound; seek out the lofty ship whereon Celer, noble offspring of Ausonia mighty in arms, rejoices to embark. Nor need ye long inquire, for lately came she across the seas, the first of her convoy, to the Dicarchean strand, laden with the Pharian harvest, and first was she to salute Capreae, and over her starboard side to pour libation of Mareotic wine to Tyrrhene Minerva. Circle gracefully about her on either side, and divide your duties: some stretch taut from the mast the hempen rigging, some set the topsails and spread the canvas to the Zephyrs; let others place the benches, or let down into the water the rudder that guides the curving bark; let there be some to make the heavy sounding-lead explore the depths, and others to fasten the skiff that will follow astern, and to dive down and drag the hooked anchor

from the depths, and one to control the tides and make the sea flow eastward: let none of the sea-green sisterhood be without a task. Then let Proteus of manifold shape and twy-formed Triton swim before, and Glaucus whose loins vanished by sudden enchantment, and who, so oft as he glides up to his native shores, wistfully beats his fish-tail on Anthedon's strand. But above all others thou, Palaemon, with thy goddess mother, be favourable, if 'tis thy desire that I should tell of thine own Thebes, and sing of Amphion, bard of Phoebus, with no unworthy quill. And may the father whose Aeolian prison constrains the winds, whom the various blasts obey, and every air that stirs on the world's seas, and storms and cloudy tempests, keep the North wind and South and East in closer custody behind his wall of mountain; but may Zephyr alone have the freedom of the sky, alone drive vessels onward and skim unceasingly o'er the crests of the billows, until he bring without a storm thy glad sails safe to the Paraetonian haven."

My prayer is heard. The West wind himself calls the ship and chides the laggard crew. Lo! already my heart sinks, chilled with fear, and I cannot, though the omen shocks me, hold back the tears that hover upon my eyelids' verge. And already the sailor has loosed the rope and sundered the vessel from the land, and dropped the narrow gangway into the water. On the stern the ruthless master with long-drawn shout severs our embraces and parts loving lips, nor may one linger long upon the dear one's breast. Yet last of all will I be to go on land, nor will I leave the ship until she is already under way.

Who made of the strange and sundered sea a highway for miserable men, and cast forth upon the waves the loyal children of the solid earth and hurled them into the jaws of ocean — daring of spirit? for not more adventurous was the valour that joined frozen Pelion to Ossa's summit, and crushed panting Olympus beneath two mountains. So small a feat was it to traverse sluggish lakes and meres and fling bridges across the narrowed streams? Forth we go into sheer void, and are fled from the native lands about us, enclosed in nought but a few planks and the empty air. Therefore do the winds and angry tempests rage, the sky thunders and many a bolt is sped from the hand of Jove. Before ships were, the waters lay in a slumbrous calm, Thetis dared not foam nor the waves assault the

clouds. But when they spied vessels, the billows swelled with rage, and the hurricane arose against man. Then the Pleiads and the Olenian goat *a* grew dark with storm, and Orion was more wrathful than his wont. Not in vain is my complaint: lo! speeding over the pathless waters flies the ship, lessening by degrees and baffling the eyes that view her from afar; how many fears does she hold within her slender timbers! thee above all must she bear onward, Celer, object of my love! With what feelings can I endure night's slumbers or the day? Who will tell me, a prey to every terror, whether the raging coast of the Lucanian sea has sped thee by on favouring waves, whether eddying Charybdis be heaving or the maid that ravages the Sicilian deep, how the furious Adriatic aids thy course, whether the Carpathian be at peace, and with what breeze the sea-nymph be wafting thee, that once smiled on the cunning of the Tyrian bull? But I have deserved to mourn: for why, when thou wert bound for the wars, went I not with thee, an unwearied traveller, to unknown India and Cimmerian gloom? By my patron's warlike banner had I been standing, were it weapon or bridle thou wert holding, or whether thou wert giving laws to armed peoples, present if not to share, at least to admire thy deeds. If Phoenix whom great Achilles honoured came long ago to the Ilian shore and Thymbraean Troy, though not a warrior nor bound by oath to proud Atrides, why is my affection cowardly? But my loyal thoughts shall be ever with thee, and my prayers shall follow thy sails to distant lands.

Isis, once stalled in Phoroneus' caves, now queen of Pharos and a deity of the breathless East, welcome with sound of many a sistrum the Mareotic bark, and gently with thine own hand lead the peerless youth, on whom the Latian prince hath bestowed the standards of the East and the bridling of the cohorts of Palestine, through festal gate and sacred haven and the cities of thy land. Under thy protection may he learn whence comes the fruitful licence of marshy Nile, why the waters abate and are hemmed within the banks that the Cecropian bird has coated with clay, why Memphis is jealous, why the shore of Therapnean Canopus makes wanton revel, why the warden of Lethe guards the Pharian shrines, why vile beasts are held equal to mighty gods; what altars the long-lived Phoenix prepares for his own death, what fields Apis, adored by trembling shepherds, deigns to graze,

and in what waters of Nile he bathes. Lead him also to the Emathian tomb, where steeped in nectar of Hybla abides the warrior founder of the city, and to the serpent-haunted palace where, sunk in lulling poison, Cleopatra of Actian story escaped Ausonian chains. Escort the youth even to his Assyrian station and the appointed camp, O goddess, and deliver him to the Roman god of war. No stranger will he be there; as a boy he laboured in those fields, known as yet only by his gleaming laticlave, though already strong to outstrip the squadrons in nimble wheeling flight, and with his javelin to discredit the arrows of the East. Therefore that day will come when Caesar, to give thee a nobler prize, shall bid thee return from the warfare thou hast ended, and I standing again upon this shore shall view the mighty waves and pray for other breezes. How proud then shall I be! How bravely shall I sound my votive lyre! when you lift me to your shoulders and I cling about your stalwart neck, and you, fresh from the ship, fall first upon my breast, and give me all your stored-up converse, and in turn we tell the story of the years between, you of rapid Euphrates and royal Bactra and the sacred wealth of ancient Babylon, and of Zeugma the way of the Peace of Rome; how sweet is Idume's luxuriant grove, with what dye costly Tyre glows scarlet, and the purple, twice plunged in Sidonian vats, is stained, where the fruitful sprays first exude the shining spikenard from the bud: while I relate what burial I have granted to the conquered Pelasgians, and rehearse the page that closes the laboured tale of Thebes.

III. A POEM OF CONSOLATION TO CLAUDIUS ETRUSCUS

In this Epicedion Statius has given the chief place to the story of the dead man's career, more in the manner of a "laudatio"; the opening is also varied, cf on ii. 6. Claudius Etruscus, the father of the man whom Statius is addressing in this poem, was born a slave at Smyrna, but rapidly rose from post to post in the Imperial household till he finally became Secretary of Finances under Nero; he was made a Knight by Vespasian, and after a brief disgrace under Domitian died at about the age of 90. His wife was of noble birth. Martial wrote a poem on the same occasion (vii. 40).

Duty, most high among gods, whose heaven-favoured deity rarely beholds the guilty earth, come hither with fillets on thy hair and adorned with snow-white robe, as when still a present goddess, before the violence of sinful men had driven thee away, thou didst dwell among innocent folk in a reign of gold; come to these quiet obsequies, and look upon the duteous tears of sorrowing Etruscus, and brash them from his eyes with words of praise. For who that saw him bursting his heart with unsatisfied lament and embracing the pyre and bending o'er the ashes would not think that it was a young wife whose death he mourned, or a son whose face just growing into manhood the flames were devouring? But it is a father whom he weeps. Come, gods and men, to the holy rites. Begone, begone, ye wicked, all in whose hearts is a crime unspoken, any who deems his aged sire has lived too long, or, conscious of ever having struck his mother, fears the urn of unbending Aeacus in the world below: 'tis the pure and guiltless I invite. Lo! gently in his arms he holds the aged face and lets his tears bedew the sacred white hairs of his sire, and lovingly gathers the last cold breath; marvellous, yet true! a son is thinking that his father's life is swiftly flown, that the black Sisters have brought the end too soon. Exult, ye placid ghosts by the streams of Lethe, rejoice, Elysian abodes! enwreath the shrines, and let festal altars gladden the pale groves. 'Tis a happy shade that is coming, ay, too happy, for his son laments him. Avaunt, ye hissing

Furies, avaunt the threefold guardian! let the long road lie clear for peerless spirits. Let him come, and approach the awful throne of the silent monarch and pay his last due of gratitude and anxiously request for his son as long a life.

A blessing on thy pious moans! I will bring solace for a grief so worthy, and unbidden pay thy sire, Etruscus, an offering of song. Do thou with lavish hand plunge Eastern incense in the flames, and the proud harvests of Cilicia and Araby; let the fire consume thy heritage of wealth; heap high the burning mass that shall waft duteous clouds to the bright sky. My gift is not for burning, but my record of thy grief shall endure through the years to come. For I too know what it is to mourn a father; I too have groaned prostrate before the pyre. That day bids me assuage thy loss by song; the lament I offer thee now was once my own.

No brilliant lineage indeed was thine, serene old man, no descent traced down from distant ancestors, but high fortune made good thy birth and hid the blemish of thy parentage. For thy masters were not of common stock, but those to whom East and West are alike in thrall. No shame is that servitude to thee; for what in heaven and earth remains unbound by the law of obedience? All things in turn are ruled and in turn hold sway. To its own monarch every land is subject: fortunate Rome lords it o'er monarchs' crowns: 'tis her rulers' duty to bridle Rome: o'er these in turn rises the sovereignty of heaven. But even deities have their laws: in thralldom is the swift choir of the stars, in thralldom is the wandering moon, not unbidden is the light whose path so oft returns. And, if only it be not a sin to compare the lowly with the highest, the Tirynthian also performed his dread covenant with the cruel king, nor did bondage shame the pipe of Phoebus.

But neither wert thou sent to Latium from barbarous shores: Smyrna was thy native soil, and thou didst drink the honoured springs of Meles and of Hermus' stream, where Lydian Bacchus bathes and tricks his horns anew in the golden silt. Thereafter a prosperous career was thine, and divers offices in due succession increased thy dignity: it was thy privilege ever to walk near divinities, ever to be close to Caesar's person and to share the holy secrets of the gods. The palace of Tiberius first was opened to thee

while early manhood scarce changed as yet thy boyish countenance; here — since thy varied gifts surpassed thy years — freedom came to thee unsought; nor did the next heir, though fierce and Fury-haunted, banish thee. In his train didst thou go, frail as thou wert, even to the frozen North, and endure the tyrant terrible in word and look and cruel to his subjects, as those who tame the dread rage of beasts and command them, though they have tasted blood, to let go the hand thrust down their jaws, and to live without need of prey. But Claudius for thy merit raised thee to highest office in his old age, ere he was summoned to the starry vault, and gave thee over to the keeping of his nephew's late-born son. Who that fears the gods was ever suffered to serve so many temples, so many altars? The winged Arcadian is the messenger of supreme Jove; Juno hath power over the rain-bringing Thaumantian; Triton, swift to obey, stands ready at Neptune's bidding: thou hast duly borne unharmed the yoke of princes, changed so many times, and thy little boat has weathered every sea.

And now from on high a light illumined his loyal home, and Fortune towering to her loftiest entered apace. Now was entrusted to him alone the controlling of the sacred treasure, wealth drawn from every race, the revenue of the mighty world. All that Iberia hews from out her gold-mines, the glittering metal of Dalmatian hills, the produce of African harvests: all that is threshed on the floors of sultry Nile, or gathered by the divers who search the Eastern seas: the tended flocks of Lacedaemonian Galaesus, frozen crystals, Massylian citron-wood, the glory of the Indian tusk: all is committed to his charge and subject to him alone, all that the North wind and fierce East wind and the cloudy South bring with them; sooner would you count the winter rains or forest leaves. Watchful too is he and shrewd of mind, and quick to reckon what the Roman arms beneath every sky demand, how much the tribes and the temples, how much the lofty aqueducts, and the fortresses by the sea, or the far-flung lines of road; what wealth of gold gleams on the high ceilings of our prince, what weight of ore must be melted in the fire and shaped into the countenance of gods, how much shall ring when stamped in the fiery heat of Ausonia's mint. Therefore hadst thou but scant repose, thy mind took no thought for pleasure, thy feasting was meagre and thy

cares never assuaged by plenteous draughts of wine; yet thou hadst joy in the ties of marriage, in binding thy heart with chains of love, in the union of festal wedlock, and in begetting faithful clients for thy lord.

Who can but know the high birth and loveliness of fair Etrusca? Never with my own eyes have I beheld her, yet the trusty image of fame reflects her peerless beauty, and a like charm of countenance in her sons reveals it. No common birth was hers; her brother wielded the rods and the highest curule power, and faithfully led Ausonian swordsmen and the standards entrusted to him, when frenzy first inspired the ruthless Dacians, and their race was doomed to afford us a mighty triumph. Thus whatsoe'er was lacking in the father's blood was made good by the mother, and the household rejoicing in the union saw its obscurity turned to brightness. Children too were nigh at hand; twice was Lucina present at the birth and deftly with fruitful hand eased the pain of travail. All! happy, had length of days and a due measure of years suffered thee to behold the faces of thy children and the bloom of youth upon their cheeks! but in the midst of thy prime those joys fell shattered, and Atropos roughly tore the thread of flourishing life; even so do lilies droop pale heads and roses die at the first South wind, or on fresh meadows the purple flower of spring withers away. Around that funeral train did ye hover, ye arrow-bearing Loves, and anoint the bier with your mother's balm; freely did ye scatter your torn hair and feathers on the flames, and your quivers were heaped to build the pyre. What offerings, what tears wouldest thou have paid at thy mother's grave, Etruscus, who deemest thy father's death untimely and mournest with true affection for his years!

He who with his nod now sways the heights of heaven, and has given of his glorious offspring to earth and sky alike, gladly granted to him the honour of an Idumaeon triumph, and deeming him worthy the distinction and rank that the procession of victory brings forbade it not, nor did obscurity of birth diminish his renown. He too led him down to the benches of the knights from among the people, and ennobled him and took off the humble iron ring and made him equal to his sons in lofty eminence. Twice eight lustres of prosperity flowed by, and his life's course was without a cloud. How lavish he

was in the service of his sons, how willing to strip himself of all his wealth, the wonted splendour of Etruscus from that day to this bears witness, for it was thy indulgence that gave him his lordly mien. Thou didst clasp him in an embrace that ever called him back to thee, and didst rule by the love and not the sternness of a father; to him even his brother rejoiced to give way, more anxious for his renown than for his own.

What gratitude, greatest of princes, what loyal vows do these youths, devoted to thy service, pay thee for their sire's rebirth! For whether he erred through age, fatigued by decay and exhausted by affairs, or whether Fortune so long favourable now had a mind to leave him, thou wert content, while in shuddering dismay he awaited the coming lightning-stroke, to warn the old man by thunder alone and by a storm that spared him; and when the partner of his cares left far behind him the fields of Italy and crossed the raging seas, he was bidden retire to Campania's mild coast and the towers of Diomedea, a stranger but no exile. Nor didst thou wait long, Germanicus, before thou didst once more unbar the gates of Romulus and console his grief and raise again the stricken house. No wonder, most tranquil prince; for this is that clemency that gives terms of mercy to the conquered Catti and restores their mountain to the Dacians; that lately though after a fierce struggle deigned not that the Marcomanni and the Sarmatian Nomads should furnish forth a Roman triumph.

And now his day is ended, and the inexorable thread runs out. The sorrowing heart of Etruscus asks me for a dirge, such as even the cliffs of Sicily re-echoed not, nor doomed swan ever sang nor cruel Tereus' bride. Ah! with what violent beating of his breast did I see him wearying his arms, flung prostrate with face bowed down to kiss his sire! Scarce can his friends and servants hold him, scarce do the towering flames make him withdraw. Not otherwise did Theseus on the Sunian shore mourn Aegeus whom his false sails had deceived. Then fearfully groaning, with disfiguring marks upon his face, he cries to the warm ashes: "Why, truest of fathers, dost thou leave us, when Fortune smiles once more? Only of late did we assuage the godhead of our mighty prince and the brief anger of the gods, but thou, naught profiting, dost lose the enjoyment of a boon so great, and fleest, ungrateful, to the shades. And is it not granted to move the

Fates, or appease the ruthless deities of deadly Lethe? Happy he, before whom as he carried his father on stalwart shoulders the Grecian flames gave way in reverent awe! and Scipio too, who while yet a lad rescued his sire from the cruel Carthaginians; happy also the daring devotion of Lydian Lausus! Is it so, then, that the Thessalian consort could give her life to save her lord? that the suppliant Thracian could defeat remorseless Styx? surely a father's life hath a juster claim! Yet shalt thou not be wholly taken, nor will I send thy ashes far: here, here within the house will I keep thy shade. Thou art the guardian and master of the hearth, all that is thine shall obey thee; I will ever, as is right, be second, and hold a lesser place, and to thy sacred shade bring constant offering of meat and drink, and worship thy image; shining marble and the cunning lines of wax shall repeat thy likeness to me; now ivory, now tawny gold shall imitate thy features. There in thy long life's story will I seek a guide for conduct, and loving converse and dreams that bring good counsel."

So he spoke, and his father heard him with joy and gladness, and went down slowly to the pitiless shades, bearing the message to tell to his beloved Etrusca.

Hail for the last time, aged sire, gentlest of fathers, and for the last time farewell! Never while thy son lives shalt thou suffer the despair of Tartarus, or the sorrow of a grave forgotten. Ever shall thy altar exhale the scent of flowers, ever shall thy happy urn drink Assyrian perfumes, and tears, a greater honour. Thy son shall make sacrifice to thy spirit, and from thy own soil raise a monument to thee. My song too, won by his own worth, he dedicates to thee, glad to have given this sepulchre also to thy ashes.

IV. THE TRESSES OF FLAVIUS EARINUS

A poem upon the dedication of the tresses of the Emperor's favourite Earinus; they were to be sent in a golden box to the temple of Asclepius at Pergamum, his birthplace. The dedication of hair was an ancient Greek custom (cf. Achilles in the Iliad), and should not be confused with the first clipping of the beard, for which see Petronius, 29, Suetonius, Nero, 12, Juvenal, viii. 166. Martial has similar poems, ix. 16, 17, 36.

Speed, ye tresses, and may ocean smile upon your passage!
Speed, while ye softly rest upon the enwreathed gold! Speed onward,
for gentle Venus will give you a fair voyage, and make the South
winds tranquil, and perchance will take you from the dangerous bark
and convey you over the sea in her own shell. Accept, O son of
Phoebus, these much-praised locks that Caesar's favourite presents to
thee, accept them joyfully and show them to thy unshorn sire. Let
him compare their beauteous sheen, and long deem them the tresses
of his brother Lyaeus. Perchance too with his own hand he will shear
a lock from his hair's unfailing glory, and enclose it for thee in other
gold.

Pergamus, more blest by far than pine-clad Ida, though she boast
the cloud that veiled the heavenly rape! She verily gave to the gods
him on whom Juno ever looks in wrath, and withdraws her hand and
refuses the nectar; but thou, beloved of heaven and famed for thy fair
foster-son, hast sent to Latium him whom Ausonian Jove and Roman
Juno alike behold with favouring brow and both approve. Nor
without the will of heaven was such pleasure vouchsafed to the lord
of earth.

Golden Venus, it is said, while on her way from the height of
Eryx to the Idalian groves, driving her gentle swans, entered the
shrine at Pergamum, where the great helper of the sick is present to
aid, and stays the hurrying fates and bends, a kindly deity, o'er his
health-bringing snake. Here she espies a lad of wondrous, starlike
beauty, playing before the very altars of the god. And at first
deceived somewhat by the sudden sight of his fair form she deems

him one of her own sons; but he had no bow nor shade of wings on his bright shoulders. She marvels at his boyish charm, and gazing at his features and his locks, "Shalt thou go," she cries, "to the Ausonian city, neglected by Venus, and endure a mean dwelling and slavery's base yoke? May that never be! I myself will find a master worthy of that beauty. Come, lad, come with me! I will convey thee in my winged chariot through the air, a wondrous present to a monarch. No common servitude awaits thee: to the Palace art thou destined, to be the minister of love. Never, I declare, never the whole world over have I beheld or given birth to aught so fair. Straightway will the Latmian yield to thee, and the Sangarian youth, and lie whom the fruitless image in the fountain and barren love consumed. The Nymph of the dark-blue water would have preferred thee, and grasped thy urn and drawn thee down more boldly. Thou, boy, dost surpass them all; only he to whom I shall give thee is more beautiful." So speaking she lifted him with her own hand through the light air, and bade him sit in the swan-drawn chariot. Straightway appeared the Latian hills and the home of ancient Evander, which Germanicus, renowned lord of the world, is adorning with new structures and making as glorious as the stars above. Then more anxious grew the goddess, what tiring of the hair best suited him, what raiment was fittest to light up his rosy countenance, what gold was worthiest of his neck or his finger. She knew the Emperor's godlike glance: herself she had joined the torches of wedlock, and with lavish hand bestowed on him his bride. So decks she his hair, so drapes the Tyrian folds about him, and gives him her own radiant fire. The former favourites yield, and the crowds of slaves; 'tis he who bears the first goblet to our great Chief, and the crystal cups and heavy murrhine vessels in hands that are fairer than they; there is a sweeter savour in the wine.

O youth beloved of heaven, who hast been chosen to sip first the sacred nectar, and so oft to touch the mighty hand that the Getae seek to know, and the Persians and Armenians and Indians to kiss! O born under a favouring star, the gods have blest thee with much goodwill! Once, lest the first down should spoil thy radiant cheeks and the charm of thy comeliness be darkened, the god of thy land left his lofty Pergamum and crossed the sea. None else was trusted to unman

the lad, but the son of Phoebus with quiet skill gently bids his body lose its sex, unmarred by any wound. But Cytherea is devoured by anxious care, and fears lest the boy suffer. Not yet had the noble clemency of our prince begun to keep our males untouched from birth; to-day it is forbidden to destroy sex and violate manhood, and nature rejoices to behold none but as she brought them forth, nor does a harsh law make slave-mothers afraid to bear the burden of sons.

Thou too, had thy birth been later, wert now a man, and with darkened cheeks and limbs full-grown and strong hadst gladly sent not one gift only to Phoebus' fane; now let this single tress make voyage to thy country's shores. This did the Paphian steep in much balm, this did the fresh Graces comb with threefold hand; to this will yield the ravished purple tress of Nisus, and that which wrathful Achilles kept for Spercheus. When first it was decreed to spoil that snow-white brow and by force to rob those gleaming shoulders, winged Cupids with their Paphian mother flew to thee, and prepared thy locks and put a silken robe about thee. Then with joined arrows they cut off the tress, and laid it on gold and jewels, and Venus their mother seized it as it fell, and anointed it once and twice with her mystic essences. Then one of the troop of boys, who by chance had brought in his upturned hands a mirror finely set in jewelled gold, cried: "This too let us give, no gift could be more pleasing to his country's shrine, and more powerful even than gold. Do thou but gaze therein, and leave thy likeness here for ever." He spoke, and shut the mirror, imprisoning the image.

But the peerless boy stretched forth his hands to heaven, and cried: "Most gentle guardian of men, vouchsafe in reward for my gift, if I so deserve, to keep our prince in the freshness of undying youth, and save him for the world. The sky, the sea, and the earth join with me in ray prayer. May he live, I pray, through the years of a Priam and a Nestor both, and rejoicing see his own home and the Tarpeian shrine grow to old age with himself." He spoke, and Pergamus marvelled that her fanes were shaken.

V. THE POET TO HIS WIFE CLAUDIA

The poet pleads with his wife to fall in with his plan to return from Rome to Naples, his birthplace.

Why are you sad, my wife, in the day-time and in the nights we share together? Why do you sigh for anxiety and wakeful sorrow? I have no fear lest it be unfaithfulness and a rival passion in your heart; you are safe against all poisoned shafts, ay — though the Rhamnusian *a* hear my words and frown — safe indeed! Even were I torn from my native shores and after twenty years of war and seafaring a wanderer still, you would repel unharmed a thousand wooers; nor would you plan to weave again the unravelled web, but would be frank and open, and even with arms deny your chamber. But say, whence comes this sullen brow, this clouded countenance? Is it that, broken in health, I purpose to return to my Euboean home, and to settle in old age on my native soil? Why does this cause you sorrow? Certainly there is no wantonness in your heart; the contests of the rushing Circus have no charm for you, no clamorous theatre-crowds find a place in your soul, but virtue and sheltered quiet and innocent joys.

But what are the waters o'er which I fain would hurry you with me? although even if I went to dwell at the cold North, or beyond the misty seas of western Thule, or to the unattainable source of sevenfold Nile, you would be urging our departure. For it is you — you, whom Venus of her grace united to me in the springtime of my days, and in old age keeps mine, you, who while yet I roved in youth nor knew aught of love did transfix my heart — you it is whose rein in willing submission I obeyed, and yet press the bit once put within my mouth, without e'er thought of change. When the Alban wreath adorned my gleaming locks, and I put on Caesar's sacred gold, you clasped me to your bosom, and showered breathless kisses on my garlands; when the Capitol rejected my lyre, you shared my defeat and mourned the cruelty and ingratitude of Jove. Your wakeful ears caught the first notes of the songs I ventured and whole nights of murmured sound; you alone knew of my long labour, and my

Thebaid grew with the years of your companionship. When lately I was near snatched away to the Stygian shades, and already heard close at hand the stream of Lethe, how grateful wert thou to my sight! My eyes, already failing in death, were stayed. Surely it was in pity of thee alone that Lachesis prolonged my exhausted term of life, and the gods above feared thy displeasure. After that do you hesitate to go with me on tin's short journey to the desirable bay? Ah! where is that loyalty of yours, well-known and put to many a test, that makes you one with the heroines of Greece and Rome? Penelope would have rejoiced to go to Ilium's town — for what deters true lovers? — had Ulysses suffered her; Aegiale chafed, and Meliboea chafed to be left behind, and she too whom grief — how savage! — drove to frenzy. Yet you no less than these are loyal, and your life is devoted to your lord. Not otherwise indeed do you still seek the ashes and shade of your former husband, and embracing the relics of your poet-spouse renew your bitter heartfelt lamentation, even now that you are mine. As great too is your care and devotion for your daughter; your love as a mother is as tender; she is never absent from your heart, but the thought of her abides day and night in the inmost chambers of your being. Less lovingly does Alcyone of Trachis flutter round her nest, and Philomela cherish her vernal home, and give her young ones the warmth of her own life. 'Tis she now keeps you, because alone and unmarried she is wasting her youth and beauty in barren leisure. But wedlock will come, ay come with all its festal torches. So assuredly does she deserve for her sweet face and virtuous mind; whether she clasp and strike the lute, or with voice as tuneful as her sire's sing melodies that the Muses might learn, while she follows the course of my songs, or whether with lithe movement she toss her snow-white arms: her innocence and modesty surpass her talent and her skill. Surely the nimble Loves, surely thou, Cytherea, wilt feel shame that such loveliness is wasted. Nor is it only Rome that is fruitful in marriage unions and blazing festal torches: in my country too are bridegrooms found. Not so utterly has Vesuvius' peak and the flaming tempest of the baleful mountain drained of their townsmen the terror-stricken cities; they stand yet, and their people flourish. Here are the dwellings of Dicarchus, founded with Phoebus' auspices, and the harbour and the shores that

the whole world visits; there are the walls that counterfeit the vastness of mighty Rome, which Capys filled with newcomers from Troy. There too is my own Parthenope, too small for her own citizens, yet with no lack of strangers, Parthenope, whom after she had fared across the sea Apollo himself by the help of Dione's dove guided to a kindly soil.

This is the spot — for neither barbarous Thrace nor Libya is my native land — whither I fain would bring you; mild winters and cool summers temper its climate, its shores are lapped by the sluggish waters of a harmless sea. Peace untroubled reigns there, and life is leisurely and calm, with quiet undisturbed and sleep unbroken. No madness of the forum, no laws unsheathed in quarrel; our citizens admit but duty's ordinance, and Right holds sway without rod or axe. Why should I now praise the gorgeous scenes and adornments of that land, the temples and wide halls spaced off by countless columns, the two great theatres, one open and one covered, and the quinquennial contests that rival the Capitoline festival? Why should I praise the shore and the freedom of Menander, a blend of Roman dignity and Grecian licence? Nor are there lacking all around the amusements that a varied life affords: whether you please to visit Baiae with its steaming springs and alluring coast, or the prophetic Sibyl's inspired abode, or the hill made memorable by the Ilian oar; whether you prefer the flowing vineyards of Bacchic Gaurus, or the dwellings of the Teleboae, where the Phams raises aloft the beacon that rivals the night-wandering moon and is welcomed by affrighted sailors, or the Surrentine hills beloved of fiery Bacchus, which my friend Pollius before all men honours by his dwelling, or the health-giving lake of Aenaria and Stabiae reborn? Shall I recount to you the thousand beauties of my country? No; 'tis enough, my wife, enough to say: This land bore me for you and bound me to you in partnership for many a year. May it not worthily be deemed the mother and foster-mother of us both? But 'twere ingratitude in me to add more words and to doubt your loyalty; you will come with me, dearest wife, ay, even go before me; without me Tiber, prince of streams, and the halls of armed Quirinus will seem dull and worthless in your eyes.

BOOK IV

STATIUS TO HIS FRIEND MARCELLUS: GREETING.

I HAVE found a volume, my dearest Marcellus, that I can dedicate to your loyal friendship. I believe that no work of mine has opened without an invocation of the godhead of our mighty Prince; but this book has three <such poems>,... and it is only the fourth that does you honour. In the first I have paid homage to the seventeenth consulship of our lord Germanicus; in the second I have returned thanks for the privilege of attending his most august banquet; in the third I express my admiration of the Domitian Road, whereby he has ended the serious waste of time caused by the sandy track. To him it is due that you will the sooner receive my letter which I am sending from Naples in this volume. Then follows an Ode to Septimius Severus, who is, as you know, one of the most distinguished young men of equestrian rank, and not only a school-companion of yours, but, even apart from that claim on me, one of my closest friends. As for the Hercules-statuettes of our friend Vindex, I can make you responsible for that also, for he has deserved well of poetry in general and of myself in particular. I bore ample testimony to my affection for Vibius Maximus on the score both of high character and of poetic gift in the letter which I published about the bringing-out of my *Thebaid*; but on this occasion I beg him to return from Dalmatia with all speed. Next comes a poem to my fellow-townsmen Julius Menecrates, a brilliant youth, noble knight, and the son-in-law of my friend Pollius: I congratulate him on having done honour to our city of Naples by the number of his children. Plotius Grypus, a youth of senatorial rank, shall have a poem more worthy of him, but in the mean time I have included in this volume some hendecasyllables that we laughed over together at the Saturnalia.

Why then, you will ask, are there more pieces in the fourth book of my Occasional Verses than in the former? Why, that they who, as I hear, have criticized me for publishing this kind of verse may feel that they have accomplished nothing. In the first place, the thing is done, and it is useless to grumble; in the second, I had already

presented many of them to our Imperial Master, compared with which publication is a trivial affair. Besides, surely one may write in sportive vein? "Only privately," say they. But we go to see games of ball, and are admitted to fencing-matches. Finally: whoever of my friends reads anything unwillingly, then and there declares himself an enemy; very well, why should I take his advice? After all, surely it is I who am being abused; let him hold his peace and be glad. But you, Marcellus, will champion this book; if you agree, well, so far so good! otherwise, I must submit to criticism. Farewell!

I. THE SEVENTEENTH CONSULSHIP OF THE EMPEROR AUGUSTUS GERMANICUS

This poem belongs to the class of Panegyric or laudation of the Emperor or other distinguished personage, which becomes common in later times, e g. Claudian, Sidonius, etc.

With happy augury the Imperial consulship *a* adds yet another to its twice eight terms, and Germanicus opens a year of glory; he rises with the rising sun and the mighty constellations, himself more brilliant than they and outshining the early Morning Star. Exult, ye laws of Latium, rejoice, ye curule chairs, and let Rome more proudly strike the sky with her sevenfold summit, and Evander's hill make louder boast than other heights! Once more the rods and axes have entered the Palace, the twelvefold honour rejoices to rest idle no more, and the Senate that its prayers are heard and Caesar's modesty is overcome. Janus himself, great renewer of eternal Time, near whom thou hast set Peace to fetter him, and bidden him bring all warfare to an end, and swear allegiance to the law's of thy new Forum, Janus lifts up his head and from either threshold utters his gratitude. Lo! on this side and on that he raises suppliant hands, and speaks thus with twofold voice: "Hail, great Father of the world, who with me preparest to begin the ages anew, thus would thy Rome ever see thee in my month; thus should eras be born, thus should the year be opened. Give joys perpetual to our annals; let those shoulders many a time be draped in purple folds, and in the bordered robe that thy own Minerva's hands make haste to weave for thee. Seest thou how' the temples gleam more radiant, how the tire leaps higher on the altars, and even my mid-winter sky grows warmer? how tribes and knights and purple-clad Senators rejoice in thy virtues, and every rank shines in the lustre of its consul? What glory so great, I ask, had the year just gone? Come, speak, imperial Rome, recount. Antiquity, with me the long annals, take no note of petty names, but such only as my Caesar would deign to surpass. Thrice and ten times in the lapse of years did Augustus wield the fasces over Latium, but only late by right of merit: thou as a youth didst outstrip thy grandsires.

And how many a time hast thou refused, how many a time forbidden to offer! Yet wilt thou be persuaded, and oft vouchsafe this day to the Senate's prayers. A longer line awaits thee yet, and as oft again, ay, thrice and four times as often will fortunate Rome grant, thee the curule chair. With me shalt thou found a second age, and the altar of thy long-lived sire shall be restored; a thousand trophies shalt thou win, wilt thou but permit the triumphs. Baetra and Babylon are still to be curbed with new tribute, not yet have Indian laurels been laid in the lap of Jove; not yet do the Arabs and Seres make petition, not yet hath the year its full tale of honour: ten months still yearn for thee to name them."

So Janus ended, and gladly withdrew into his closed portals. Then all the gods flung wide their temples, and gave signs in the glad vault of heaven, and Jupiter vouchsafed thee. () mighty leader, a perpetual youth and his own years.

II. A POEM OF THANKSGIVING TO THE EMPEROR AUGUSTUS GERMANICUS DOMITIANUS

Statius offers his thanks to the Emperor for the great banquet given to Senators and Knights in his new palace, to which the poet had been invited.

He who brought great Aeneas to the Laurentian fields extols the royal banquet of Sidonian Elissa, and he who ended Ulysses' story with his return after long seafaring portrays in lasting verse the supper of Alcinous: but I, on whom now for the first time Caesar has bestowed the unwonted rapture of a feast divine, and granted me to ascend to the table of my prince, what skill have I to sing my blessings, what power to express my thankfulness? Not even if Smyrna and Mantua both were to bind their laurels on my exultant head, could I make worthy utterance. Methinks I recline with Jove in mid-heaven, and take the immortal wine proffered by an Ilian hand! I have lived barren years, but this is my natal day, this day is the threshold of my life. Is it thou, O ruler of the nations and mighty sire of the conquered world, is it thou, O hope of men and care of the gods, whom I behold while I lie at meat? Is it granted me indeed to gaze at those features face to face, amid the feasting and the wine, and lawful not to rise up in thy presence?

An edifice august, huge, magnificent not with an hundred columns, but with as many as would support heaven and the gods, were Atlas eased of his burden. The neighbouring palace of the Thunderer views it with awe, and the Powers rejoice that thou hast a like abode. Nor wouldst thou hasten to ascend to the great sky; so huge expands the pile, and the reach of the far-flung hall, more unhampered than a plain, embracing beneath its shelter a vast expanse of air, and only lesser than its lord; he fills the house, and gladdens it with his mighty spirit. Libyan mountain and gleaming Ilian stone are rivals there, and much Syenite and Chian and the marble that vies with the grey-green sea; and Luna also, chosen but to bear the pillars' weight. Far upward travels the view; scarce does

the tired vision reach the summit, and you would deem it the golden ceiling of the sky. Here when Caesar has bidden the Roman chieftains and the ranks of knighthood recline together at a thousand tables, Ceres herself with robe upgirt and Bacchus strive to serve them. So bounteous were the gliding wheels of airy Triptolemus; so did Lyaeus overshadow the bare hills and sober fields with the branches of his vines.

But no leisure had I to behold the feast or the tables of Moorish wood resting on supports of Indian ivory, or the rows of attendant slaves, so eager was I — to gaze upon himself, ay himself, calm-visaged and in majesty serene tempering his rays and gently veiling the glory of his state; yet the splendour that he would fain conceal shone in his countenance. Such as he was, barbarian foes and foreign tribes would have known him had they seen him. Not otherwise does Gradivus recline in the cool vale of Rhodope, his steeds unyoked; even so does Pollux weary from the wrestling-bouts of Therapnae lay down his slippery limbs; so lies Euhan by Ganges' side while Indians howl; so stern Alcides, returning after his grim errand, rejoices to lay his side upon the outstretched lion-skin. I speak of trivial things, nor can I yet find any rival to thy countenance, O Germanicus: such is the monarch of the gods, when he visits once more the bounds of Ocean and the Ethiopian board, and, his face suffused with sacred nectar, bids the Muses utter their mystic songs, and Phoebus praise the triumph of Pallene.

May the gods grant thee — for 'tis said they oft give ear to lesser souls — to surpass, twice and thrice over, the limits of thy sire's old age! Mayst thou send appointed deities to the sky, and grant temples and abide in thy palace! Many a time mayst thou fling wide the threshold of the year, and many a time with new lictors offer thy greetings to Janus, many a time renew the garlanded festival of the quinquennial games! The day whereon thou didst vouchsafe to me the sacred blessings *of* thy feast and board came to me after long time as glorious as that when beneath the hills of Trojan Alba I sang now of German wars, now of Dacian battles, and thy hand set the golden circlet of Pallas on my brow.

III. THE DOMITIAN ROAD

The Via Domitiana, built in 95, replaced the old, very bad road along the coast from Sinuessa to Naples; the Appian Way struck inland at Sinuessa, and a long detour was necessary, if travellers to Naples wished to avoid the bad road. The new road thus effected a considerable shortening of the journey.

What fearful sound of hard flint and heavy iron fills the stony Appian way where it draws nigh the sea? Certainly no Libyan hordes are thundering, no foreign chieftain scours restlessly the Campanian fields in treacherous warfare, nor is Nero hewing a canal, and making a way for squalid meres through cloven mountains. Nay, he who encircles the warlike threshold of Janus with justice and courts of law, he who restores to innocent Ceres acres long denied her and a sober countryside, he who forbids the strength of sex to be destroyed, and as Censor will allow grown males no more to fear the punishment of beauteous form, he who restores the Thunderer to the Capitol, and sets Peace in her own home, he who consecrates to his father's line lights that will aye endure, a Flavian heaven— 'tis he who, brooking ill the slow journeys of his people and the plains that clog every minute of the road, sweeps away tedious windings and lays a new solid paving upon the weary sands, rejoicing to bring the Euboean Sibyl's home and the dells of Gaurus and sweltering Baiae nearer to the seven hills.

Here on a time the tardy traveller, borne on a single axle, was balanced on the swaying pole, while the unkindly earth sucked in the wheels, and Latin folk shuddered in mid-plain at the evils of a sea-voyage; nor could carriages run nimbly, but the noiseless track made their course hampered and slow, while the fainting beast, complaining of a too heavy load, crept on beneath its lofty yoke. But now a journey that once wore out a solid day is performed in scarce two hours. No swifter fare ye through the heavens, ye birds with outstretched pinions, nor will ye more swiftly sail, ye ships.

The first labour was to prepare furrows and mark out the borders of the road, and to hollow out the ground with deep excavation; then

to fill up the dug trench with other material, and to make ready a base for the road's arched ridge, lest the soil give way and a treacherous bed provide a doubtful resting-place for the o'erburdened stones: then to bind it with blocks set close on either side and frequent wedges. Oh! how' many gangs are at work together! Some cut down the forest and strip the mountain-sides, some plane down beams and boulders with iron; others bind the stones together, and interweave the work with baked sand and dirty tufa; others by dint of toil dry up the thirsty pools, and lead far away the lesser streams. These hands could hollow out Athos, and bar with no floating bridge the doleful sea of moaning Helle. These hands, did not the gods forbid the passage, had made Ino's puny Isthmus mingle the sundered seas. The shores are astir and the waving woods, the din travels afar through the cities that lie between, and the vine-bearing Massic mount, throws back to Gaums the echoes that scatter on every side. Quiet Cyme marvels at the noise, and the Linternian lake and sluggish Savo.

But Vulturinus, his yellow head and wide-flung watery tresses entangled in soft sedge, raises his face and leaning against the mighty arch of Caesar's bridge pours out from his strident throat such words as these: "Gracious benefactor of my plains, who, while I poured o'er trackless vales nor knew how to dwell within my banks didst bind me by the law of a strict channel, now do I, that turbulent and dangerous stream, who once scarce brooked frail vessels, already endure a bridge, and am trodden by travellers underfoot; I who was wont to whirl forest and field to ruin, shame on me! am beginning to be a river. But I give thee thanks, and my servitude is worth the while, because under thy rule and at thy command I have yielded, and because thou wilt be read of perpetually as supreme lord and conqueror of my bank. And now thou honourest me with splendid embankments, nor sufferest me to be foul, and far and wide dost purge away the evil shame of barren soil; so that the gulf of the Tyrrhenian sea need not cleanse my muddy, sky-polluting stream, like to Cinyphian Bagrada crawling between silent banks through Punie fields: nay, so brightly shall I flow that I shall challenge the calm sea with my sparkling current, or neighbouring Liris with my unstained waters."

Thus spoke the river, and therewith a marbled stretch of roadway

had arisen with mighty ridge. Its portal and auspicious threshold was an arch that shone with the warlike trophies of the Prince and all Liguria's mines, as vast as that which rings the clouds with rain. There the wayfarer turns aside with quickened speed, there the Appian road grieves that she is left. Then swifter and more furious grows the pace, and even the beasts exult in the speed: as when the rowers' arms are weary and the first breezes fan the sails. Come then all ye who beneath the sky of dawn owe fealty to the Roman Sire, flock hither all ye races on this easy road, come, more swiftly than before, ye laurels of the East. Nought hinders your eagerness, nought delays your course: he who leaves Tiber at dawn of day, let him sail the Lucrine lake at earliest eventide.

But what woman is this with snow-white hair and fillet whom I see at the new road's extremest end, where Apollo's temple shows Cumae's ancient site? Does my vision err? or does the Sibyl bring forth the Chalcidic bayleaves from her sacred grot? Let us retire; lute, lay by thy song! a holier bard begins, and we must be silent. Lo! how she whirls her head around, and rushing in frenzy far and wide about the new-made track fills all the roadway! Then thus she speaks with virgin mouth: "I said it, he will come — have patience, ye fields and river! — he will come by heaven's favour, who will raise this rotting woodland and these pestilent sands on lofty bridges and a causeway. Lo! a god is he, at Jove's command he rules for him the happy world; none worthier than he has held this sway since under my guidance Aeneas, eagerly searching out the future, penetrated Avernus' prescient groves and went forth again. A friend is he to peace, and terrible in arms, more bountiful than Nature and more powerful. Were his the government of the flaming sky, thou India wouldst be moist with abundant showers, Libya would stream with waters, Haemus would be warm. Hail, ruler of men and parent of gods, foreseen by me and fore-ordained was thy godhead. No longer scan those words of mine that the fifteen men with solemn prayer unroll on mouldering sheets, but face to face, as thou deservest, hear me chant my oracle. I have seen what chain of meritorious years the Fates white-clad are weaving for thee; a mighty roll of centuries awaits thee, longer than son or grandson shalt thou bear the years that Nestor reached, as they say, in tranquil age, as many as old Tithonus

counted or I myself asked of the Delian god. Already the snowy North has paid thee homage, soon the Orient will give thee mighty triumphs. Where wandering Hercules and Euhian went thou shalt go, beyond the stars and the flaming sun, and the source of Nile and the snows of Atlas, and blest in all thy wealth of noble deeds thou shalt mount and again refuse the chariots of war: so long as the Trojan fire *b* shall abide and the Tarpeian Father thunder in his reborn shrine, yea, until under thy governance of the earth this road grows older than the Appian's years."

IV. A LETTER TO VITORIUS MARCELLUS

Vitorius Marcellus was of equestrian family, but became Praetor, and was also given charge of the Via Latina; for other details see 1 Praef., ll. 9, 41 ff and 65 of this poem.

Haste at no laggard speed, my letter, o'er the Euboean plains; set out upon thy road where the famous Appia branches sideward, and a solid mound is planted on the yielding sands. And when swiftly travelling thou hast reached the towers of Romulus, seek forthwith the right bank of yellow Tiber, where the Lydian shore straitens narrowly the naval basin, and suburban pleasure-gardens fringe the water. There shalt thou see Marcellus, peerless both in valour and in looks, and thou shalt know him by the mark of his lofty stature. First pay thy greeting in the accustomed manner, then remember to deliver this verse-embodied message:

“Already the flight of rainy spring sets free the earth and the rushing pole, and scorches the heaven with Icarian hayings; already the high walls of crowded Rome grow empty. Some sacred Praeneste shelters, some Diana's ice-cool glade or rugged Algidus or the shades of Tusculum; others are eager for the groves of Tibur or Anio's cold waves. And thou — what gentler region draws thee from the clamorous city? With what sky art thou baffling the summer suns? And Gallus, thy favourite, thy chiefest care, whom I too love — whether more to be praised for virtue or for wit I know not — does he pass the summer on Latiuni's coast, or seek again the walls of Luna rich in mines and his Tyrrhenian home? But if he is close by thy side, my name now is not far from thy converse; ay, 'tis certain; that is why both my ears are buzzing. But do thou, while the angry mane of Cleonae's star is blazing, possessed by Hyperion's exceeding might, set free thy heart from cares and escape from constant toil. The Parthian puts up his noxious arrows and unstrings his bow, and the charioteer refreshes in Alpheus the steeds that Elean labours have exhausted, and my lyre grows weary and is relaxed: timely repose heartens and nourishes strength, valour is increased by a spell of ease. Even so Achilles, when he had sung of Briseis, went

forth the fiercer, and putting by his quill burst out against Hector. Thee too will leisure sought once more awhile secretly kindle, and thou wilt go forth refreshed and exultant to thy wonted tasks. Now indeed the Roman courts have ceased to bicker, 'tis the season of idleness and peace, and the return of the harvest has emptied the forum. Defendants no more throng thy chambers, no querulous clients pray thee to come forth. Idle is the spear that rules the Hundred Judges, before whom even now in all the brilliance of high renown, thy eloquence is pre-eminent and outstrips thy youthful years. Happy thou in thy labours, who carest not for the chaplets of Helieon nor for unwarlike bays from Parnassus' summit, but thy intellect is keen, and thy mind girt up for mighty deeds endures whatever may befall: we beguile a leisured life with song, and seek the fickle delights of fame. Lo! I myself, in quest of sleep and that genial shore where the stranger Parthenope found refuge in an Ausonian haven, pluck at my frail strings with feeble fingers, and seated by the threshold of Maro's shrine take heart and make melody at the mighty master's tomb. But thou, if Atropos gives thee a long span of life — and 'tis my prayer she may, and that the godhead of the Latian prince may so appoint, whose zealous worshipper, ay even before the Thunderer, thou art, and who adds another duty to thy year of office, and bids thee renew the hilly courses of the Latin Way — thou perchance shalt go to curb the cohorts of Ausonia, or 'tis thy task to guard the peoples of the Rhine or dark Thule's shores, or Ister and the dread approaches of the Caspian gate. For it is not only the gift of powerful eloquence that is thine: thou hast limbs that are made for war, and thews that with difficulty put on the heavy corselet; should'st thou prepare to go on foot, thy helmet's peak will nod high above the ranks; should'st thou bend the jingling reins, the mettlesome charger will do thy bidding. We, singing the deeds of others, fall into old age: thou resplendent in thy armour shalt perform actions meet for song, and set a noble pattern before the youthful Geta, of whom already his warrior grandsire is demanding worthy feats and grants him to know the triumphs of his house. Up, then, be doing, and overtake thy sire, though he be a man and thou but a lad, happy alike in thy mother's lineage and thy father's prowess. Already blissful Glory nourishes thee, and fondles thee in her robe of

Tyrian dye, and delights to promise thee all the curule chairs.”

Such, Marcellus, is the song I am singing thee on the Chalcidic strand, where Vesuvius hurls forth broken rage, outpouring fire that would rival Trinaerian flames. Marvellous, but true! Will future ages believe, when once more crops are growing, and these wastes are green again, that cities and peoples lie beneath, and that their ancestral lands have perished by a like fate? And still that peak threatens ruin. Far be that fate from thy Teate, nor may such madness seize the Marrueinian hills!

If now perchance you ask what my muse is attempting, my *Thebaid*, having completed her Sidoniac toils has at last furled her sails in the wished-for haven, and on the ridges of Parnassus and in the glades of Helicon has thrown incense on the festal flames and the entrails of a virgin heifer, and hung up my chaplets on a votive tree. And now another band new twined encircles my vacant locks: ay, 'tis Troy I am attempting and great Achilles, but the Sire that wields the bow calls me elsewhere and points me to the mightier arms of the Ausonian chief. Long since has impulse urged me thither, but fear holds me back. Will my shoulders sustain so great a burden, or will my neck yield under the weight? Tell me, Marcellus, shall I essay the task? or must my bark that knows but lesser seas not yet be trusted to Ionian perils?

And now farewell, and let not regard for the poet who is wholly devoted to thee pass from thy mind; for neither was the Tirynthian chary of warm-hearted friendship; to thee shall yield the fame of loyal Theseus, and of him who to comfort his slain friend dragged Priam's mangled son around the walls of Troy.

V. A LYRIC ODE TO SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

An Alcaic ode in the Horatian manner to his friend Septimius, a young man of equestrian family, who, like the future Emperor of that name, was born in Leptis in Africa. He had been a fellow-pupil of Vitorius Marcellus.

Happy amid the glories of my small estate, where ancient Alba dwells in her Trojan home, I salute in unwonted strains the brave and eloquent Severus.

At last harsh winter has fled to the Parrhasian North, o'erwhelmed by lofty suns; at last the cold winds are softened into mild zephyrs, and sea and land are smiling. Now every tree puts forth her yearly tresses of spring leaves, now are heard the birds' new plainings and the unpractised songs which they planned in the silent winter. As for me, my thrifty domain and ever-wakeful hearth and roof-tree blackened by many a fire console me, and the wine that I take from the jar where lately it fermented. Here no thousand woolly sheep utter bleatings, no cow lows to its sweet lover; and only to their master's voice, as he sings, whene'er he sings, do the mute fields re-echo. But this land, after my native country, holds first place in my love: here the maiden queen of battles favoured my songs with Caesar's golden crown, when you, striving with all your might, succoured your friend in his joyous hazard, even as Castor trembled at all the noise of the Bebrycian arena.

Did Leptis that loses itself in the distant Syrtes beget you? soon shall she bear Indian harvests, and despoil the perfumed Sabaeans of their rare cinnamon. Who would not think that my sweet Sceptimius had crawled an infant on all the hills of Rome? Who would not say that he had drunk, his weaning done, of Juturna's fountain? Nor is your prowess to be wondered at: straightway, still ignorant of Africa and its shallows, you entered the havens of Ausonia and sailed, an adopted child, on Tuscan waters. Then, still a lad, you grew to manhood among the sons of the Senate, content with the glory of the narrow purple, but with patrician soul seeking unmeasured labours. Neither your speech nor your dress is Punic, yours is no stranger's

mind: Italian are you, Italian! Yet in our city and among the knights of Rome are men who might well be foster-sons of Libya. Pleasing too is your voice in the strident courts, but your eloquence is never venal; your sword sleeps in its scabbard, save when your friends bid you draw it. But oftener do you enjoy the quiet country now in your father's home on Veientine soil, now on the leafy heights of Hernica, now in ancient Cures. Here will you plan more themes in the words and measures that move unfettered, but remembering me at times strike anew the lyre that lies hid in some shy grotto.

VI. THE HERCULES STATUETTE OF NOVIUS VINDEX

The poem consists chiefly of the description of the Hercules, a statuette (epitrapezios = statue to be put on a table) belonging to Novius Vindex, a connoisseur in art, who is mentioned by Martial (vii. 72. 7) in addition to the two epigrams in which the same statuette is described (ix. 43, 44). The statue was a bronze, and represented the god as seated, with a goblet in one hand and the club in the other; the type is a common one (see Roscher's Lexicon der Mythol i. 2176). It is clear that both Statius and Martial, as well as Novius, took it for a genuine work of Lysippus.

One day when putting aside my tasks with heart unburdened by Phoebus I was wandering aimlessly at sundown in the broad spaces of the Enclosure, kind Vindex took me off to dine. That feast sank deep into the recesses of my soul, and remains unconsumed. For it was no wanton dainties of the belly that we devoured, no sweetmeats sought under distant suns, no wines whose ages rival our continuous Annals. Unhappy they whose delight is to know how the bird of Phasis differs from a crane of wintry Rhodope, what kind of goose has the largest liver, why a Tuscan boar is richer than an Umbrian, on what seaweed the slippery shell-fish most comfortably recline: as for us, real affection and discourse fetched from the heart of Helicon and merry jests persuaded us to sit out a winter's night and to banish soft sleep from our eyes, until the other Twin looked forth from Elysium, and Tithonia laughed at yesterday's banquet. O night of bliss! would it had been Tirynthian, with moon added to moon! a night to be marked with the Erythraean gems of Thetis, a night to be long told of, a night whose spirit will live for ever! There and then did I learn of a thousand beauties of bronze and ancient ivory, and deceiving shapes of wax on the verge of speech. For who ever rivalled the keen glance of Vindex in recognizing the hand of an old master and telling the author of an untitled work. 'Tis he who will show you on what bronzes cunning Myron spent anxious vigils, what marbles the chisel of untiring Praxiteles has made to live, what ivories the thumb of the

Pisaeon has smoothed, what statues have been bidden breathe in Polyclitus' furnaces, what lines confess from afar the old Apelles; for this, whensoever he puts his lyre from him, is his leisure, this passion calls him from Aonian dells.

Amid these treasures was a Hercules, the deity and guardian of his frugal board, with which I fell deeply in love; nor, though long I gazed, were my eyes sated with it; such dignity had the work, such majesty, despite its narrow limits. A god was he, ay, a god! and he granted thee to behold him, Lysippus, small to the eye, yet a giant to the mind! And though his stature be marvellously confined within a foot's height, yet will you be fain to cry, as you east your eyes o'er his limbs: "This is the breast that crushed the ravager of Nemea, these the arms that bore the deadly club, and broke the oars of Argo." To think that a tiny frame should hold the illusion of so mighty a form! What preciseness of touch, what daring imagination the cunning master had, at once to model an ornament for the table and to conceive in his mind mighty colossal forms! No such work could Telchines in the caves of Ida, or dull Brontes or the Lemnian who makes bright the armour of the gods have playfully fashioned from some small lump of metal. No wrathful likeness was it, unsuited to the gaiety of the feast, but in such mood as the home of thrifty Molorchus marvelled to behold, or the Tegean priestess in Alea's groves; or as when, sent heavenward from Oeta's ashes, he joyfully drank the nectar, though Juno still frowned: with even so kindly a countenance, as if rejoicing from his heart, doth he cheer the banquet. One hand holds his brother's tipsy goblet, but the other forgets not his club; a rocky seat supports him, and the Nemean lionskin drapes the stone.

So divine a work had a worthy fate. It was a deity revered at the merry banquets of the Pellaeon monarch, and alike in East and West it bore him company; gladly did he set it before him, with that same hand that had given crowns and taken them away, and had ruined mighty cities. From it he sought courage for to-morrow's battle, to it he related, triumphant, the glorious fight, whether he had despoiled Bromius of fettered Indians or with his strong spear had burst the enclosing walls of Babylon, or overwhelmed in war the lands of Pelops and Pelasgian freedom; and of all that tale of mighty deeds he

is said to have asked pardon only for his Theban triumph. He too, when the Fates out short his prowess, and he drank the deadly draught, in the very gloom and heaviness of death, was afraid at the altered face of his favourite deity, and at the bronzes that dripped sweat at that last banquet.

Next its marvellous beauty was possessed by the Nasamonian chief; and Hannibal, that ruthless warrior, haughty and treacherous in fight, paid honours to the valiant god. Yet the god hated him, drenched in Italian blood and threatening Roman homes with terrible flame, ay, even when he set feasting and gifts of wine before him; in sorrow' did the god go forth with that cursed troop, especially when his own shrines were impiously fired, when the homes and temples of innocent Saguntum were outraged, and its people filled with righteous frenzy.

And after the death of the Sidonian leader 'twas no plebeian house obtained the peerless bronze. Ever wont to enter famous houses and blest in the lineage of its lords it adorned the feasts of Sulla.

Now too, if deities care to know the hearts and souls of men, no palace, no royal pomp surrounds thee, O Tirvnthian, but thy master's soul is pure and revolted against him. Thebes was the birthplace of Hercules. innocent of error; old-world loyalty is his, and the unfailing bond of a friendship once begun. Vestinus knows it, who even in youth equalled his mighty sires, and whose spirit Vindex breathes by night and day, and lives in the embrace of that beloved shade. Here then hast thou a welcome resting-place, Alcides, most valiant of gods, nor beholdest battles or savage fights, but the lyre and chaplets and music-loving bays. Here in solemn chant will he recount to thee in what might thou didst terrify Getic and Ilian homes and snowy Stymphalus and Erymanthus with its streaming ridges; how the owner of the Iberian herd, how the Mareotic guardian of the cruel shrine endured thy power; he will sing of the gates of Death penetrated and spoiled by thee, of the weeping maids of Libya and of Scythia. Neither the ruler of the Macetae nor barbarous Hannibal nor the uncouth accents of fierce Sulla could e'er have celebrated thee in such strains. And of a surety thou, Lysippus, the author of the gift, wouldst not have chosen to be approved by other eyes than these.

VII. A LYRIC ODE TO VIBIUS MAXIMUS

A Sapphic ode in which the poet expresses his desire to see his friend again, and congratulates him on the birth of a son. Vibius Maximus was serving in Dalmatia; at a later time he was prefect of Egypt, as we learn from an inscription (C.I.L. iii. 38). One may also gather that he had literary tastes.

Long time, bold Erato, hast thou had thy fill of the spreading field, but now put off thy heroic labours and contract thy mighty task to narrower circles; and thou, Pindar, ruler of the lyric choir, grant me awhile the privilege of unwonted song, if I have hallowed thy own Thebes in Latin strains: 'tis for Maximus that I attempt to refine my verse; now must I take my garlands from unplucked myrtle, now a nobler thirst is mine, a purer stream must be quaffed. When wilt thou return again to pleasant Latium from the Dalmatian mountains, where the miner returns all pale at the sight of Dis and yellow as the gold he has unearthed? Lo! I, though born in nearer lands, am not held fast by lazy Baiae's lovely haven, or by the trumpeter known to Hector's battles. Without thee my Muse is sluggish, even Thymbra's lord is slower than of wont in his coming, and lo! my Achilles halts at the first turning-point of his course: while it is with thee for trusty counsellor that my *Thebaid*, tortured by endless polishing, attempts with audacious string the joys of Mantuan renown. But we pardon thy delaying, because thou hast established thy empty home with flourishing offspring. O happy day! lo! a second Maximus comes to us! Childlessness must be shunned by every effort; the heir with hostile vows presses hard upon it, asking — ah! for shame! — that his best friend soon may die. Childlessness wins no tears at the grave; in the captured house stands the greedy survivor, eager for the spoils of death, and counts the cost of the very pyre. Long live the high-born babe, and, by a path that few may tread, may he grow into his father's virtues, and rival his grandsire by his deeds! Thou shalt tell thy child how thou didst lead thy swordsmen to Eastern Orontes, commanding 'neath Castor's favour the banners of thy well-curbed squadrons. He shall relate how he followed the swift-flashing brand

of invincible Caesar, and imposed a hard law on the fugitive Sarmatians, to live under one sky. But first let the lad learn thy skill, whereby retracing all the old age of the world thou dost render again the work of brief Sallust and the foster-son of Timavus.

VIII. A POEM OF CONGRATULATION TO JULIUS MENECRATES

This, like the last piece, is a Genethliacon, or birthday poem; Statius congratulates his friend on the birth of his third child. Menecrates was the son-in-law of Pollius Felix.

Fling wide the thresholds of the gods, Parthenope, and fill the chaplet-hung shrines with clouds of Sheba's incense and the breathing entrails of victims! lo! by yet a third offspring is the house of illustrious Menecrates increased. Thy noble host of princes grows and atones the loss that mad Vesuvius caused thee. Nor let Naples in lonely isolation throng her festal altars; let her fellow-haven and the land that gentle Dicarcheus loved and the Surrentine tract dear to the tipsy god enwreath their shrines with garlands, — that shore where dwells the babe's maternal grandsire, with his crowd of grandchildren around him, rivalling each other in their likeness to him. Let the uncle too, famed for his Libyan spear, rejoice, and Polla, who counts them her own sons as she raises them to her loving bosom. A blessing on thee, O youth, who givest in due reward to thy country such bright progeny. Lo! the house rocks with delightful tumult, ringing with the cries of so many masters. Avaunt, black Envy, turn elsewhere thy livid breasts! To these hath white-robed Atropos promised old age and the glory of enduring worth, and their native Apollo vouchsafed the bays of poesy. Therefore was it an omen that the most august sire of the Ausonian City had given thee the glad privilege of triple offspring. Thrice has Lucina come, and again and yet again visited thy dutiful home. Long live that house, I pray, in fruitfulness and never robbed of its hallowed gifts! A blessing on thee also, that thy issue was increased more often by the strength of males, yet the girl too must needs delight her youthful father — for them is prowess more fitting, while she will the sooner bear him grandsons so fair a child was Helen, as she walked between her Amyclaeon brethren, yet ripe already for her mother's wrestling-bouts; so fair is the face of heaven, when on a tranquil night two radiant stars draw near to the moon that shines between them.

But I have a complaint, O rarest of youths, and no gentle one, ay, angry am I even, so far as love admits of anger. Was it right that common report should tell me of such joys? and when thy third infant was wailing, did no letter straightway haste full speed to bid me heap the altar with festal flames and entwine my lyre and wreath my portals, and bring out a cask sooted with Alban smoke and mark the day with song, but only now, a tardy laggard, do I celebrate my vows? Thine is the fault, thine is the shame of it! But I cannot further prolong my plaint; lo! in a merry crowd thy children surround thee, and defend their sire. Whom wouldst thou not conquer with such a troop?

Gods of our land, whom with mighty omens the Abantian fleet conveyed o'er the sea to the Ausonian shore, and thou, Apollo, guide of thy far-wandering folk, whose bird seated on thy left shoulder prosperous Eumelis lovingly beholds and worships, and thou, Attic Ceres, for whom in breathless dance we thy mute votaries cease not to wave the mystic torch, and you, ye Tyndarids, to whom not grim Taygetus, Lycurgus' mount, nor shady Therapnae gives truer worship: gods of our country, preserve this home with all its souls! May there be those who by speech or wealth shall succour their city that age and many toils have wearied, and keep her as green and youthful as her name! From their father may they learn gentle ways, and from their grandsire splendour that yet is bountiful, and from both the desire of glorious virtue. Assuredly their riches and their birth suffer the maid to enter patrician doors with the first marriage-torches, and the sons, so soon as manhood comes — if only the godhead of invincible Caesar favour the deserving — to tread the threshold of the Senate-house of Romulus.

IX. LINES WRITTEN IN JEST TO PLOTIUS GRYPUS

The subject suggests Catullus, xiv. 12. Statius rebukes Plotius Grypus for giving him an unworthy present in return for a fine one. The hendecasyllable was a favourite metre for comic or gibing verse.

Yours was indeed a jest, Grypus, to send me a book in return for a book! And yet even that may seem graceful, if after it you send me something worth having; for if, Grypus, you keep on with such jests, they are jests no longer. Look, we can reckon the account. Mine, painted purple, its paper new, adorned with two knobs, cost me, besides my own trouble, well, certainly a ten-as piece! Yours, moth-eaten and mouldering, like those that are soaked by Libyan olives, or wrap up incense or pepper from the Nile, or cultivate the Byzantine tunny; not containing even your own youthful speeches that you thundered at the three Courts or the Hundred Judges, before Germanicus placed the obedient corn-supply under your control, or put you in charge of the posts on all the roads, but the mumblings of ancient Brutus out of a wretched book-peddler's case, that cost you, roughly shall we say, an as of Gaius e — that was your present! Were there then no more felt caps stitched together from rags of tunics, no towels or faded napkins? no writing-paper, or Theban dates, or Carian figs? nowhere a bunch of plums or Syrian figs packed in a collapsible case? no dry wicks or cast-off jackets of onions? no eggs even, or fine flour, or coarse spelt? not the slimy shell of a curving snail that had strayed far on the Cinyphian plains? no rancid fat or gristly ham? no sausage, no tough haggis? no salt, no pickle, no cheese? or cakes of green saltpetre? or raisin-wine boiled grapes and all? or must made muddy by sweet lees? How unkind, not to give me smelly candles, or a knife, or a tiny notebook! Pray, could you not have sent some tinned grapes, or some plates turned on the wheel at Cumae? or even one set — why do you start? — of white cups and pots? No, like a fair dealer with a correct seale, you dock nothing, but give me exactly equal weight. But look! I get up betimes, feeling rather queasy, and bring you my morning greeting:

are you to return it at my house? you have regaled me with a luxurious feast: do you expect a similar repast yourself? I am angry with you, Grypus! However, farewell! only do not with your usual wit send me back gibing verses by return of post!

BOOK V

STATIUS TO HIS FRIEND ABASCANTUS: GREETING!

GOOD examples should be whole-heartedly honoured, since they are publicly beneficial. The devotion which you show to your Priscilla is a true part of your character, and must needs win you the affection of all, especially of a husband. For to love a wife is a joy, while she is alive, and a religion, when she is departed. It was not, however, as a mere stranger that I undertook this task, nor only with the readiness of one bound by ties of duty. For Priscilla loved my wife, and by that love made her more worthy in my eyes; after that it were ingratitude in me to take no notice of your grief. Further, I always strive, insignificant as I am, to deserve well of all adherents of the Sacred Palace. For he who in good faith worships the gods, loves their priests also. But although I had long desired a more intimate experience of your friendship, yet I would rather the occasion had not come so soon.

I. A POEM OF CONSOLATION ON THE DEATH OF PRISCILLA

Priscilla was the wife of Abascantus, who held the important post of Secretary of State to Domitian. This epicedion follows the usual lines of such poems, see Intro to i. — 1.

Had I but skill of hand to mould likenesses in wax or to leave a living impress upon gold or ivory, thence would I imagine, Priscilla, a grateful solace for thy husband. For his conspicuous devotion merits that thou thyself, whether painted by Apelles' brush or given life by Phidian art, shouldst be brought back to calm his grief; so valiantly strives he to rescue thy ghost from the pyre, and wages a mighty struggle with Death, and exhausts the cunning of the craftsmen, and in every metal would fain show his love of thee. But mortal is the honour that toil of clever hands can pay: 'tis the poet's endeavour to bring thee, peerless consort of a youth renowned, a tribute that will endure nor suffer oblivion at the last, the due offering of eternal song, if only Apollo be propitious, and Caesar, who ever in Apollo's company aids me, gives assent; no other nobler sepulchre wilt thou find.

Late indeed is the balm composed for so great a sorrow, when yet once more the wheels of Phoebus are bringing round the year; but when the stroke is recent and the house still sable-clad in the first shock of woe, what access then to the poor husband in his loss? Then were it solace enough to weep and tear the raiment, to fatigue troops of slaves and outdo their lamentations, to assail the Fates and an unjust heaven with wild and frenzied cries. Though Orpheus himself with woods and streams for company came to assuage thy groans, though all his mother's sisters and every priest of Bacchus and Apollo sustained the minstrel, yet nought would avail to give relief, not music, not those strings whereto the gods of pale Avernus and the Furies' locks paid heed: such anguish held sway in his distracted heart. Even now does the scar though smooth yet wince at my lament, and the rain of a husband's love forces itself into those burdened eyes. E'en yet do those orbs hold pious drops? O

marvellous truth! Sooner, as they say, docs the Sipylean dame drain dry her tears, or the dews of sorrow fail Tithonia, or Achilles' mother grow weary and sated of breaking her wild waves against his tomb. Bless thy passionate soul! the god who holds the reins of earth, he who nearer than Jove directs the doings of mankind — he marks thee and beholds thy grief; and hence also doth he take secret knowledge of his chosen minister, because thou lovest her shade and honourest her in death. Here is a zeal that is pure indeed, a passion that merits the praise of thy keen-searching lord.

Yet 'tis no wonder, if long-enduring Harmony bound you by an unbroken chain in the close union of heart with heart. She indeed had known a former husband and the torches of earlier wedlock, yet did she embrace and cherish thee with all her soul and inmost being, as though she were a virgin bride; even so does the elm love the clinging tendrils of the coeval vine, and mingles with its foliage and prays that autumn may bring it richness and rejoices in its dear entwining clusters. Women who lack the graces of the soul are praised for ancestry or gift of loveliness; and falsely great they lack a true renown; but though a brilliant lineage was thine, and the blessing of a beauty that husbands would prize, yet thy own boast is prouder, that thou knewest but one bed, didst feed but one passion in thy secret heart. That love no Phrygian ravisher would have outraged, no Dulichian suitors, nor that adulterer who polluted his brother's innocent spouse with Mycenaean gold. Ay, did you offer the riches of Babylon or weight of Lydian treasure or the lordly wealth of Ind or Araby or China, she had preferred to die poor in untainted chastity, and given her life to save her honour. Yet was there no forbidding sternness in her look, nor o'ermuch austerity in her ways, but a gay and simple loyalty, and modesty blent with charm. Yet if some dread crisis had summoned her to harder tasks, gladly would she have borne on her lord's behalf the assault of armed bands or the lightning's stroke or the perils of midocean. Happier was thy fate, that adversity ne'er proved how true thy devotion, how great thy anxiety for thy spouse. Ay, happier was thy path, and thy prayers merited heaven's favour for thy husband, while day and night thou didst weary the gods, and lie prostrate at every altar and adore the present godhead of our gentle lord. Thy prayers

were heard, and Fortune came with favouring step. For *he* beheld the quiet industry, the unsullied devotion of a loyal youth, whose mind was busy with schemes, whose alert intelligence and sober judgement were fitted to unravel the skein of circumstance — *he* saw, who knows the hearts of all his subjects, and with well-trying servants guards safely every quarter. Nor is that wonderful: he scans the East and the West, he knows what the South and what the wintry North is doing, and puts sword and gown to the proof, ay, the very heart itself. He placed upon those bowed shoulders a mighty burden, a weight scarce tolerable — no duties more manifold does the Sacred Palace know — to send far and wide into the great world the commands of the Roman Prince, to handle all the powers and modes of empire; to learn what laurelled message comes from the North, what news from wandering Euphrates or from the bank of twynamed Ister or from the standards of the Rhine, how much we have won of the world's end or of Thule round which the tidal waters roar — for every spear raises joyous leaves on high, and no lance is marked with the feather of ill-report; moreover, should the Master distribute loyal swords, to make known who suffices to control a century, a knight-sent among the companies of foot, who to command a cohort, whom the more excellent rank of illustrious tribune befits, who is suited rather to give orders to a cavalry troop; again, to anticipate a thousand chances, whether Nile has drenched his fields, whether Libya has been moistened by Southern rains; were I to count all his labours, no more numerous are the messages that the winged Tegean with revealing wand bears from the stars on high, or Juno's maid, who glides down through the liquid air and binds her pictured are about the rainy sky, or Fame, who brings thy laurels, O Germanicus, in her swift flight outstripping the day, and leaves the slow Arcadian beneath the stars and Thaumantia in mid-heaven.

How joyful, Priscilla, wert thou seen of gods and men on that auspicious day when first thy spouse was promoted to his great career! Almost did thy happiness surpass his own, while thou didst eagerly fling thyself prostrate before the sacred feet of thy lord for his great favour, and pour out all thy heart. Not such joy doth she know upon the Aonian mount whom the Delian sire hath put in charge of the openings of the mystic cave, or she to whom Bacchus

hath awarded the dread privilege of the foremost wand, and to bear the banner of the frenzied rout. Yet was her tranquillity not changed, nor her goodness puffed up by prosperity; her mind keeps the same course, and her modesty abides, though her fortunes rise. Anxiously she tends her husband's cares, and cheers and alleviates his toils. Herself she serves his modest board and sober cups, and admonishes him by the example of his chief; just as the Apulian wife of some thrifty husbandman, or sun-burnt Sabine dame, who sees by the peeping stars that her lord will soon be come, his labours o'er, briskly sets the tables and the couches, and listens for the returning plough. I speak of trivial things: nay, at thy side she had willingly braved the gelid North and Sarmatian snows and Ister and the pale frosts of Rhine, at thy side steeled her courage throughout summer heats and gladly borne the quiver, did the camp permit, and gladly shielded her body with an Amazonian targe — so but she might see thee in the dust-clouds of battle hard by the Emperor's thundering steed, brandishing godlike shafts and bedewed with the sweat of his great spear.

So far my lyre has been propitious; but now it is time to doff thy bays, O Phoebus, and doom my tresses to sad cypress-leaves. What god joined Fortune and Envy in truceless kinship? who bade the cruel goddesses engage in unending war? Will the one set her mark upon no house, but the other must straightway fix it with her grim glance, and with savage hand make havoc of its gladness? Happy and prosperous was this abode, no shock assailed it, no thought of sorrow; what cause was there to have fear of Fortune, treacherous and fickle though she be, while Caesar was favourable? yet the jealous Fates found a way, and barbarous violence entered that blameless home. So do the laden vineyards feel the deadly sirocco's blast, so rots the high corn with too much rain, so does the air envy the rapid craft it meets, and gathers storm-clouds about its prosperous sails. Fate plucks away the peerless beauty of Priscilla: just as the lofty pine, the glory of the woodland, is wasted of its foliage, be it by fell fire of Jove or that its roots are loosened, and so despoiled answers no more the whispering breeze. What avails goodness, or chaste loyalty, or worship paid to heaven? The dark snares of death encompassed around the wretched woman, the

Sisters' ruthless threads are tightened, and there abides but the last portion of the exhausted span. No succour could crowds of slaves bring her in her distress, nor the physicians' toilful art; yet while friends on every side feign looks of hopefulness, she marks her husband weeping. He now implores in vain Lethe's inexorable stream, now sheds anxious tears at every shrine and leaves his imprint at the gates and flings himself down upon the threshold, now calls upon Caesar's merciful deity. Alas! the cruel course of Fate! is there then aught that Caesar may not do? What tarrying could there have come to mortal lives, if thou, O Sire, hadst been all-powerful! far away would Death be groaning, imprisoned in the unseeing pit, and the idle Fates would have laid their spinning down.

And now her face falls, her eyes take their last wavering glances, and the hearing of the ears is dulled, save when only she recognizes her husband's voice; him only does her mind returning from the midst of death perceive, him with faint arm's does she bravely grasp, turning to him her stiffened cheeks, nor wishes to sate her eyes with the last glimpse of light, but only with her dear spouse. Then dying she thus consoles the loving heart that was one with hers: "O thou, my soul's still-surviving half, to whom I would fain leave the years that cruel Atropos takes from me, spare thy tears, I pray, beat not thy breast with savage lament, nor vex thy consort's fleeing spirit. I leave, 'tis true, a marriage-bower, yet in the due order of dying, because I die the first; better the life I have lived than a long old age; I have seen thee in the full splendour of thy fame, I have seen thee draw nearer and more near to the right hand on high. No fate, no god has power over thee now; I take with me their power to harm. Do thou go gladly on in the path thou hast entered, and love unfailingly the sacred presence, the spirit of our Prince. Now — a behest after thine own heart — give to the temple on the Capitol gold that endures for ever, that the countenance of sacred Caesar may gleam in a statue that weighs a hundred pounds, and prove his constant votary's love. So shall I behold neither Furies nor dire Tartarus, but be admitted, a blessed soul, to Elysian regions." Thus with failing strength she speaks, and clings to her consort's arms, and unrepining breathed out her lingering soul into her husband's lips, and closed her eyes with the hand she loved.

But the heart of her spouse was ablaze with passionate grief; now he fills the bereaved home with frenzied crying, now would fain set free the steel, now climbs to lofty heights — scarce can his friends restrain him — now broods o'er his lost one with mouth joined fast to mouth, and savagely excites the grief that is hidden in his heart: even as the Odrysian bard seeing his wife's corpse fell dazed and horror-struck, and flinging down his quill on Stiymon's bank in songless sorrow mourned the pyre. He too had courageously cut short the term of life, that thou shouldst not go unaccompanied to Tartarean gloom, but loyalty to his Prince forbids, loyalty that roused the wonder of the Sacred Monarch, and a yet greater love.

Who could recount in worthy song the obsequies and funeral gifts of that unhappy train? There heaped together in long array is all the liquid wealth of Arabian and Cilician springs, Sabaeen blooms and Indian produce destined for the flames, and incense, spoil of Palestinian shrines, Hebrew essences withal and Corycian petals and Cinyrean buds; she herself reclines on a lofty couch of silk 'neath the shade of a Tyrian awning. But in all the concourse none looks but at the husband, on him is bent the gaze of mighty Rome, as though he were bearing youthful sons to burial: such grief in his looks, such darkness upon his hair and eyes. Her call they happy in her quiet and peaceful end, 'tis for the husband their tears are shed.

There is a spot before the city where the mighty Appian way has its first beginning, and Cybele lays aside her grief in Italian Almo, nor remembers the streams of Ida any more. Here thy peerless consort — for he could not bear the smoke of burning and the clamour of the pyre — laid thee, delicately arrayed in Sidonian purple, blissfully to rest. Length of years will have no power to harm thee, nor the labours of time to wither and mar thy limbs: such wealth of perfume does the venerable marble breathe. Soon art thou changed into manifold images and born anew: here art thou Ceres in bronze, here the bright Cretan maid, Maia beneath that dome, an innocent Venus in this marble. The deities scorn not to accept thy lovely features: attendants stand about thee, a multitude wont to obey; then couches and tables duly without ceasing.

A house hast thou there, a house! Who would call it a gloomy sepulchre? Justly would one exclaim, seeing the devotion of her

spouse: "Truly is he the minister of him who lately for his everlasting race founded a sacred shrine, and set his kindred stars in another heaven." So when some great ship sets forth on a new voyage from the Pharian strand, and already has stretched out on either side a thousand ropes and the broad arms of her sail-bearing mast, and started on her way, some tiny pinnacle sails on the same sea, and claims her share of the limitless South wind.

Why now, choicest of youths, dost thou cherish sorrow in thy heart beyond due measure, nor suffer thy long grief to have an end? Fearest thou lest Priscilla tremble at Cerberus' howling? he is silent for the blessed. Lest the sailor be slow to draw nigh her, or disturb her on the waters? He conveys deserving souls forthwith, and quietly sets them in his welcoming craft. Moreover, whenever a shade approaches that has won the praise of a loving spouse, Proserpine bids summon joyful torches, and the heroines of old to come forth from hallowed bowers and scatter the shades of gloom in radiant light, and strew garlands and Elysian flowers before her. Thus doth Priscilla enter the kingdom of the dead; there with suppliant hand she prays the Fates for thee, and placates the lords of grim Avernus, that having fulfilled the term of human life thou in old age mayst leave thy prince still giving peace to the world and still young! The unfailing Sisters take oath to grant her prayers.

II. THE PRAISES OF CRISPINUS, SON OF VETTIUS BOLANUS

A letter of congratulation and good wishes to Crispinus, a lad of sixteen, just appointed military tribune. The announcement of this appointment is kept back till the end of the poem, the opening lines referring to a holiday taken by the boy shortly before that event, but is anticipated throughout. His father was a celebrated officer named Bolanus, who had served with distinction in Asia Minor, Armenia, and Scotland.

My Crispinus is off to Etruscan fields and the glades of Tages; not for long is his sojourning, nor distant the land, but my heart is torn with secret pangs, and my brimming eyes set the large tears rolling, as though I watched o'er the stormy Aegean the sails of a departing friend, and from a cliff gazed wearily yet after the vessel, and complained that my sight was baffled by the long reach of air.

Ah! if it were the brilliant opening of a soldier's career that called thee, noble youth, or the glad auspices of the camp, what joyful tears would flow, in what warm embraces would I clasp thee! Must friends then even welcome sadness? And already thy life has accomplished twice eight courses, but thy spirit is more robust than thy tender age, and thy years quail before their task, and thy will brooks not their control. Nor is that wonderful: thine was no unrenowned lineage, nor wast thou born of plebeian stock, obscure of family and devoid of ancestral fame; no child of equestrian blood or but newly granted the robe of knighthood and the humble stripe didst thou as a newcomer knock at the august abode and hallowed chamber of the Latian Senate, but preceded by a long array of thine own kinsmen. Just as when on the wide spaces of the Roman Circus a horse is awaited, comely to behold and generous with the blood of famous sires, in whose long pedigree a lucky mating has produced distinguished parentage; the applause of all excites him, the very dust and the round turning-points welcome with joy his flying hooves: so did the Senate-house know thee, illustrious boy, as born for itself, and set the patrician crescent on thy youthful feet. Soon did thy shoulders

recognize as their own the wonted Tyrian folds and the proud tunic. And indeed thy sire was preparing for thee mighty patterns of thy fame to be. For on the threshold of manhood he straightway made warlike attack on quiver-bearing Araxes and Armenia that would not learn to serve fierce Nero. Corbulo held command in the stern warfare, but even he admired Bolanus, his comrade in battle and partner of his toils, in many a glorious fight; on him too was he wont to lay his keenest anxieties, and shared with him his fears, what occasion befriended ambush, what times were good for open fighting, when to suspect the word and when to trust the flight of proud Armenia. Bolanus it was who knew beforehand the perils of the route, Bolanus who sought the ridge that served the safety of the camp, Bolanus who measured out the fields and cleared the dangerous hindrances of torrent or forest, who fulfilled the mighty purposes of that revered chieftain, and alone of all availed to carry out his great commands. Already the barbarian land itself knew the hero well; his was the second crest in battle, his helm stood nearest to his chief's. So were the Phrygians dismayed, and though it was the arms of Nemea they saw, and Cleonae's bow that drove their ranks in rout, ay, though Alcides fought, yet feared they Telamon also. Learn, boy — for no stranger needst thou seek to teach thee the fair love of valour; let kindred renown inflame thee: others may seek a pattern in Decius or the returning of Camillus — learn thou the lesson of thy sire, in what might he entered Thule that sets a barrier to western waves, where Hyperion is ever weary, and bore the commands of Caesar, how powerfully he governed the thousand cities of lordly Asia in the allotted year, yet with justice tempering authority. Drink in with ready ear these stories, for these let thy kinsmen strive to win thy love, these precepts let thy comrades and thy father's friends repeat.

And now thou art planning a journey to other lands, and art preparing to be gone with no sluggish stride; not yet have the signs of vigorous manhood crept about thy cheeks, blameless still is the tenour of thy life. Nor is thy father with thee: a cruel fate has taken him, he is dead, leaving two children without a guardian. He did not even take off the purple of boyhood from thy youthful arms, or put the white raiment about thy shoulders. Whom hath not unrestrained

youth corrupted, and the too hasty freedom of the gown! even as a tree, when it knows not the knife, luxuriates in growth and wastes its fruitfulness in leaf? But beneath thy youthful breast arc modesty and study of the Muse and a nature self-controlled; mirth too thou hast and honesty and a tranquil brow, and an elegance that stops short of luxury, and loyal devotion lavished on every side; the fortune of thy house has taught thee to give place to thy brother of equal age, to reverence thy sire and to forgive thy hapless mother. Could she bring herself to mix for thee the accursed cup of deadly juices, who by thy voice canst avert the bite of serpents, and by thy look soften the heart of any stepmother? Fain would I vex her shade, and by merited curses banish peace from her pyre: but thou, O best of youths, dost turn thy face, I see, and ponderest such words as these: "Spare the dust, I pray; 'twas destiny and the wrath of guilty Fates; that god was to blame, who looks too late into human hearts, nor checks upon the threshold the motions of evil and the unhallowed plottings of the mind. May that day perish from Time's record, nor future generations believe it! Let us at least keep silence, and suffer the crimes of our own house to be buried deep in whelming darkness. He wreaked the penalty who hath care of those who are his, at whose word Loyalty hath returned and come on earth again, whom every sin doth fear. Sufficient for us and deserving of our tears is his vengeance. Nay, could we but implore the fierce Avengers, and keep Cerberus from that timid shade, ay, more swiftly grant thy ghost the waters of forgetfulness!"

A blessing on thy heart, O youth! yet the greater grows thy mother's crime. Not devotion only, but high courage also has been thy aim. Lately when thy friend grew pale at a false charge and unmerited ill-fame, and the Julian law awoke the Courts, and girt with her train of justices arose and shook her lightning-brand of chastity: thou, although without experience of trials or stern laws, but ever hidden in the silence of thy studious shade, yet didst take upon thee to avert his fears, and, thyself an unarmed recruit, to repel the bolts that threatened thy terror-stricken friend. Never before did Romulus and our Dardanian ancestor behold so young a combatant wage gowned warfare in mid-forum. The fathers were amazed at so brave a venture and at thy daring and even the innocent feared thee.

In thy limbs too is the same vigour, and thy strength ever ready for valiant deeds is sufficient for thy courage and obedient to high behests. Myself I saw thee of late on Tiber's bank, where the Tyrrhenian wave foams against Latian shallows, speeding on thy course, and with naked heel goading the flank of thy mettled steed, with threatening hand and visage: — as I speak truth, I stood aghast, and thought thee armed for battle — ; so fair to see rode Ascanius on a Gactulian horse a-hunting into his stepmother's fields, brandishing Trojan shafts, and made hapless Elissa burn with passion for his sire; not otherwise did Troilus circling more nimbly elude the menacing steeds, or he whom as he wheeled round the turning-posts of Arcady in the dust of Thebes the Tyrian matrons beheld from their high towers with no unkindly eyes.

Come then — for thy Prince's favour urges thee on, and thy brother leaves sure footprints for thy vows, — arise with valiant heart, and bethink thee of the camp and its manly cares. Mars and the Attic maid shall show thee the battle line, Castor shall teach thee to wheel thy horsemen, Quirinus to clash thy arms upon thy shoulders, Quirinus who suffered thee to make ring upon thy youthful neck the cloud-born shields and armour unstained with blood.

To what lands then, to which of Caesar's worlds wilt thou go? Wilt thou swim Northern rivers and the broken waters of Rhine, or sweat in the hot fields of Libya? Wilt thou make Pannonian mountains tremble, and the Sauromatae that shift their dwelling? Shall sevenfold Danube hold thee, and Peuce that lies amid her lover's shady streams? Or wilt thou tread the dust of Solyma, and the captive palm-groves of Idume, who not for herself did plant her fruitful orchards? But if the land that thy mighty parent curbed receive thee, how will savage Araxes thrill with joy! What glory will exalt the Caledonian plains! when some aged dweller in that bloodthirsty land tells thee: "Here was thy father wont to give justice, from this mound would he harangue his horsemen; watch-towers and strongholds in wide circuit did he set — dost thou see? — and drew a trench around these walls; these gifts, these weapons did he dedicate to the god of war — thou seest still their titles; this cuirass he himself put on at the battle's summons, this one did he take from off the British king." Such tales would Phoenix tell to Pyrrhus, as he

planned victorious war against the Trojans, of Achilles whom he had never known.

Happy thou, Optatus, who trusting in thy supple youth shalt endure whatever road or rampart thou shalt approach, girt thyself also with the sword, perchance — so be the godhead of the Prince propitious — and the untiring comrade of thy bosom friend, even as was devoted Pylades, or Patroclus in the Dardan war. A union of hearts is yours; true affection is this, and I pray that it abide. For me, the years of vigour speed fast away; therefore with vows and prayers will I cheer thy spirit, and mine as well! But if I utter my wonted lament and the Roman fathers come to hear my song, I shall then feel thy loss, Crispinus, and my Achilles *a* will look on every bench for thee in vain. But thou shalt return yet more renowned — not idly run the prophecies of the seers — and he who now admits thee to the eagles and the camp shall grant thee to accomplish all the degrees of rank, and to be surrounded by the rods of power, and to take thy seat on thy father's curule chair.

But who is this that from Trojan Alba's lofty hills, whence that present deity looks forth upon the Avails of his own Rome hard by, enters outstripping Rumour, and with his news fills all thy house, Crispinus? Surely was I saying: "Not idly run the prophecies of the seers." Lo! Caesar unbars for thee the mighty threshold of renown, and entrusts the sword of Ausonia to thy keeping. Forward, lad! having striven so far have strength for this great privilege, happy, who even now dost swear homage to thy mighty Chief, and to whom divine Germanicus doth give thy first sword! This is no lesser gift, than if the God of War himself bestowed on thee his strong eagles, and set his grim casque upon thy head. Go in good heart, and learn to merit yet higher honours!

III. THE POET'S LAMENT FOR HIS FATHER

The longest and most elaborate of the epicedia, and marked by much deeper and more genuine feeling than the others (except perhaps v. 5); it is to be noticed that it only appears in the fifth book of the Silvae, though his father had died about fifteen years previously. Possibly the last book was posthumous; it has no preface to it, as the others have, only a letter to Abascantus, and its last poem is an unfinished one.

Do thou thyself, most learned sire, vouchsafe me from Elysian springs a bitter potency in the music of grief, and the touch of an ill-omened lyre. For without thee I may not move the Delian grottoes, or awake Cirrha to wonted strains. All that Phoebus of late revealed in his Corycian bower, and Euhan upon the hills of Ismara, I have unlearned. The fillets of Parnassus have dropped from my brow, and I have beheld in fear the deadly yew creep in among the ivy-leaves, and the trembling bay — ah! horror! — wither and die. Yet surely I am he who, loftily inspired, essayed to extol the deeds of great-hearted kings, and to raise my song to the height of Mars himself. Who has doomed my spirit to decay? Who has drawn a cold shroud of mist about my blighted heart, and drowned my inspiration? The goddesses stand dismayed around the bard, and with neither voice nor finger make sweet melody. Their queen herself sinks her head upon her silent lyre, as when after Orpheus' loss she halted by thy stream, O Hebrus, and gazed at the troops of beasts that listened no more, and the woods that moved not since the strains were gone.

But thou, whether freed from the body thou soarest to the heights and reviewest the glittering realms and the elements of things, learning what is God, whence cometh fire, what orbit guides the sun, what cause makes Phoebe wane and has power to restore her hidden light, and dost continue the music of renowned Aratus; or whether in the secluded grassy meads of Lethe, among gatherings of heroes and spirits of the blest, thou dost attend the Maeonian and Aseraeon sages, thyself no feeble shade, and makest music in thy turn and minglest thy song with theirs: O grant a voice and inspiration, father,

to my great grief. For thrice has the moon journeyed o'er the heaven, and thrice displayed her countenance, and still beholds me sluggish, and my sadness unconsolated by any draught of Helicon; ever since thy pyre shed its red light upon my face, and with streaming eyes I gazed upon thy ashes, I have held cheap my poet's art. Scarce do I for the first time free my mind for tasks like this, and (e'en now with failing hand and no tearless eye) essay to shake my silent sorrow from its torpor, leaning against the tomb in which thou dost rest at peace in our own fields, — those fields where after Aeneas' death star-bright Ascanius set Alba upon Latian hills, in hatred of the plains that Phrygian blood had drenched, the royal dower of his ill-omened stepdame. Here in thy honour — nor softer is the fragrant breath of Sicanian crocus, nor the rare cinnamon that rich Sabaeans pluck thee, nor perfumed blossoms of Arabia — O thou who deservest full meed of holy offerings, do I make musical lament; ah! receive the groans and the anguish of thy son, and tears such as have been shed for but few fathers. Would it were my fortune, to build an altar to thy shade, a work that would match temples, to raise high the soaring fabric, higher than Cyclopean rock or the Pyramids' bold masonry, and plant a mighty grove about thy tomb. There had I surpassed the tribute of the Sicilian sepulchre, and Nemea's precinct and the rites of maimed Pelops. There no naked band of Grecian athletes would cleave the air with the Oebalian disk, no sweat of steeds would water the ground or hoof-beat ring upon the crumbling track; there would be but the choir of Phoebus, and I would duly sing thy praise, O father, and bind on thee the minstrel's prize of leaves. I myself, as priest of the dead and of thy soul, would with moist eyes lead a mournful dirge, from which neither Cerberus with all his mouths nor Orpheus' cruel bond could keep thee. There as I sang of thy goodness and thy deeds perchance thy love had deemed me not second to Homer's mighty utterance, ay, would even fain hold me equal to Maro's solemn chant.

Why does the mother who sits bereaved by her son's still-glowing pile assail the gods and the Sisters' brazen threads more bitterly than I? Why she who looks upon the flames that consume her youthful spouse, and breaks through the hands that stay her and the resisting crowd, to die, do they but suffer her, upon her husband's blazing

corpse? More fiercely even than theirs, perchance, does my reproach strike Tartarus and the gods; perchance even alien eyes find sorrow in the funeral train. Ay, not Nature only nor Affection have lent themselves to my grief for these sad rites: for to me, O father, thou wert cut off on manhood's earliest threshold, and in the prime of life didst enter cruel Tartarus. For neither did the Marathonian maid lament Icarus' death, that savage countrymen wrought, more sparingly than his mother mourned Astyanax hurled down from the Phrygian tower. Nay, Erigone stifled her sobs in the noose that took her life; but thou, when mighty Hector was dead, didst stoop to serve a Haemonian lord.

I shall not bring to my father's pyre that tribute of death-music which the swan when he knows his doom sends to the world beneath, nor the warning strains surpassing sweet that the Tyrrhenian winged maids chant to mariners from the fatal cliff: no sorrowful tongueless plaint of Philomela to her cruel sister: the minstrel knows them all too well. Who by the grave's side has not recounted all the branches and all the amber tears of the Sun's daughters, and Phrygia's flinty rock, and him who dared make music against Phoebus, while Pallas rejoiced that the boxwood-pipe deceived him? Nay, let Pity that has forgotten men, and Justice recalled to heaven, and Eloquence in either tongue bewail thee, and Pallas and the Heliconian train of minstrel Phoebus; those also whose toil it is to guide Aonian song in six-foot measures, and they who fit their strains to the Arcadian tortoise-shell, and find in the lyre their labour and renown, those whom 'neath every sky sublimest Wisdom counts in the sevenfold roll of Fame; they who in the dread buskin have thundered out the fury and the wickedness of kings, and told of the sun's light hidden from the earth, and they whose joy it is to relax their powers in Thalia's wantoning, or to maim of one foot the heroic tenor of their lay. For all measures in the broad path of eloquence did thy mind embrace, in all wert thou a master, whether it pleased thee to bind thy utterance in poesy, or to fling it wide in unfettered speech and rival the rainstorms by the unbridled torrent of thy words.

Lift up, Parthenope, lift up thy head half-buried from the dust that suddenly whelmed thee, lay thy tresses merged beneath the mountain's exhalations upon the tomb of thy great departed son: than

whom neither the Munyehian towers nor learned Cyrene nor Sparta's valiant spirit gave birth to aught more excellent. Wert thou lacking in lineage, humble and unrenowned, with nought of thine own race to show, his citizenship would prove thee Grecian and sprung from Euboea by ancestral blood. He, whene'er he celebrated the solemn quinquennial feast in famous verse, as often offered his temples to receive thy laurel-prize, surpassing the utterance of Pylian sage and Dulichian prince alike, and binding the likeness of either on his brow. No mean birth of blood obscure was thine, nor was thy family without distinction (though expenses straitened thy parents' means); for it was in rich pomp that Infancy chose thee to lay by the purple garb given in honour of thy birth and the proud gold from off thy breast. Straightway at thy appearing the Aonian sisters favourably smiled, and Apollo even then my friend dipped thy boyish lyre and steeped thy lips in the sacred stream. Nor is thy country's glory single, and the undecided contest of two lands leaves the place of thy origin in doubt. Grecian Hyele, where the drowsy steersman fell from the poop and passed a distressful vigil in the waves, — Hyele, made their own by Latian settlers, claims thee on the score of birth; but then mightier <Parthenope> proves thee hers by thy life's long course — even so different cities with as many birth-places divide Maeonides among themselves, and prove their case every one; yet is he not the true scion of all, but the vast pride of a false claim puffs up the vanquished. There, while thou didst begin thy lays and offer thy greeting to life, straightway wert thou hurried into the contests of thy native festival that men can scarce sustain, so eager wert thou for praise and bold of wit. The Euboean folk stood amazed at thy youthful verse, and parents showed thee to their sons. Thereafter was thy voice frequent in combat, and at no solemn feast inglorious: not so often did green Therapnae applaud Castor's victory upon the round course, or Pollux triumphant in the boxing-match. But if to win at home was easy, what a feat to gain Achaean prizes, shading thy temples now with the spray of Phoebus, now with Lerna's grasses, now with the Athamantian pine, when Victory so often quailed for weariness, yet never missed thee or robbed thee of thy leaves, or touched another's hair!

Hence came it that thou wert trusted with the fond hopes of

parents, and under thy guidance noble youths were ruled, and learnt the ways and the prowess of men of old — the fate of Troy, Ulysses' tardy return, what power has Maeonides to describe in song the battles and steeds of heroes, how the bards of Ascra and of Sicily enriched the faithful husbandmen, the law that sways the recurrent, winding rhythms of Pindar's lyre, Ibycus who besought the birds, Aleman whose strains warlike Amyclae sang, proud Stesichorus, and bold Sappho who feared not Leucas, but took the heroic leap, and all others whom the harp has deemed worthy. Skilled wert thou to expound the songs of Battus' son, and the dark ways and straitened speech of Lycophron, and Sophron's tangled mazes and the hidden thought of subtle Corinna. But why speak I of lesser names? Thou wert wont to bear an equal yoke with Homer, and match his hexameters in prose, nor ever be outdistanced and fail to keep his pace. What wonder if they left their own land and sought thee, all whom Lucania sent and the acres of stern Daunus, and the home that Venus bewailed and the land that Alcides slighted, and the maiden who from Sorrento's height watches the Tyrrhenian deep, and the hill above the nearer bay "marked by the trumpet and the oar, those too whom Cyme sent, once a stranger to her Ausonian home, and the haven of Dicarchus and Baiae's shore, where pants the fire deep-mingled with the midmost waves and the smothered conflagrations keep their dwellings? So from every side came the folk to Avernus' rocks and the dark grotto of the Sibyl, to ask their questions, while she sang of the wrath of heaven and the doings of the Fates, no vain prophet even though she foiled Apollo. Soon dost thou educate the Roman youth and the chieftains that shall be, and firmly ledest them in the footsteps of their sires. Under thy care grew the Dardanian overseer of the hidden fire, who conceals the mysterious theft of Diomede, and from thee while a boy did he learn the rite: thou didst approve the Salii, and teach them their weapons' use and show to the augurs the sure foreknowledge of the air; thou didst tell to whom belongs the privilege of unfolding the Chalcidic oracle, and why the hair of the Phrygian flamen is concealed; and the girt-up Luperci sorely feared thy blows.

And now of that company one perchance gives laws to Eastern races, another quells Iberian tribes, another at Zeugma sets bounds to

the Achaemenian Persian; these curb the rich peoples of Asia, those the lands of Pontus, these by peaceable authority declare pure justice in the courts, those hold loyal watch and ward in camps; thou art the source of their renown. In moulding youthful minds neither Nestor nor Phoenix, guide of his untamed fosterchild had striven with thee, nor Chiron, who with far different strains subdued the heart of Aeacides, fain to hear the bugles and the blast of horns.

Whilst thus thou wert busy, of a sudden civil Strife raised her torch on the Tarpeian mount, and stirred Phlegraean combats. The Capitol glows with impious fire, and Latian cohorts showed the fury of the Gauls. Scarce had the flame abated, still burnt that funeral pyre of gods, when thou undismayed, eagerly forestalling the brands themselves, didst chant with pious voice a solace for the shrines destroyed and lament the captured thunderbolts. The Roman chieftains and Caesar, heaven's avenger, marvel, and from the midst of the blaze the Sire of the gods gives sign of favour. And already was it thy purpose to bewail in pious chant the conflagration of Vesuvius, and expend thy tears on the ruin of thy native land, when the Father caught up the mountain from the earth and lifted it to the skies, then hurled it far and wide upon the hapless cities.

I too, when I knocked at the groves of song and the glens of Boeotia, and claimed myself thy offspring, was given entrance by the goddesses; for it was not only sky and sea and land that thou didst give me, the due and wonted gift of parents, but this glory of the lyre, such as it is, and thou first taughtest me no common utterance, and to hope for fame even in the tomb. What was thy pride, so oft as I charmed the Latian fathers with my song, while thou wert present, a happy witness of thy own bounty! What confusion of delight and tears was thine, of hope and loving fear and modest joy! That was indeed thy day, the glory as much thine as mine! Such is the father that beholds his son upon Olympian sand, he strikes each blow himself more mightily, deeper in his heart's depth does he receive the stroke; 'tis he whom the crowded tiers are watching, he on whom the Achaeans gaze, while his eyes grow dim with the whirling dust, and he prays to die so but the prize be grasped. Alas! that in thy sight I bore only native chaplets on my brow, and only Ceres' gift of the Chalcidic wreath. How proud hadst thou been, scarce had thy Dardan

estate of Alba held thee, if through me thou hadst won a garland given by Caesar's hand! What strength had that day ministered to thee, what relief to thy old age! For in that the oak and olive together did not press my brow, and the hoped-for prize eluded me — ah! how gladly hadst thou received the Tarpeian Father's unattainable reward! Under thy guidance my *Thebaid* followed the footsteps of ancient bards; thou didst teach me to give vigour to my song, to describe heroic deeds and modes of war and the setting of the scene. Without thee my course wavers and runs uncertainly, and mist shrouds the sails of my lonely craft. Nor was it I alone thy bountiful love did cherish: such wert thou too toward thy spouse. Thou knewest the torches of but one wedlock: one passion alone inspired thee. Assuredly I cannot separate my mother from thy cold tomb: there doth she feel and know thy presence, she sees thee, and morn and eve salutes thy grave, as other women in feigned loyalty attend on Phavian or Mygdonian grief, and bewail an alien death.

Why should I tell of thy frank, yet earnest nature? thy loving heart, thy contempt of gain, thy care for honour, thy passion for the right? and yet again, when it pleased thee to relax, of the charm of thy converse? of thy mind that knew no age? For these deserts of thine the ruling providence of the gods has granted thee renown and kindly fame, and saved thee from the sadness of any blow. Thou art taken, father, not lacking years, nor overburdened; ten spaces of five years hast thou added to three lustres. But grief and affection suffer me not to count thy days, O thou who wert worthy to surpass the Pylian bounds of life and equal a Priam's age, worthy to see me too as old! But the gate of death was not dark for thee: gentle was thy passing, nor did a tardy end fore-ordain thy frame in senile dissolution to the ever-threatening grave, but a tranquil unconsciousness and death that counterfeited slumber set free thy soul, and bore thee to Tartarus under the false semblance of repose. Ah! what groans I uttered then! my friends saw me with anxiety, my mother saw me and rejoiced to recognize her son. What lamentation did I make! Pardon me, O shades; father, I may say it with truth: thou wouldst not have wept more for me! Happy was he who grasped his sire with ineffectual arms; ay, he would fain have snatched him away, though set in Elysium, and carried him once more through

Danaan darkness: and when he made essay and strove to walk with living steps to the underworld, the aged priestess of Diana, goddess of the dead, conducted him. Even so a lesser cause brought the Odrysian lyre to sluggish Avernus: so was it with Admetus in the land of Thessaly. If one day brought back the shade of Protesilaus, why should thy harp or mine, O father, win no request of the underworld? Might I but touch the face of my sire, might I but grasp his hand with mine, let any law that will o’ertake me!

But do ye, O monarchs of the dead and thou, Ennean Juno, if ye approve my prayer, send far away the Furies’ brands and snaky locks! Let the warder of the gate make no fierce barking, let distant vales conceal the Centaurs and Hydra’s multitude and Scylla’s monstrous horde, and, scattering the throng, — let the ferryman of the dead invite to the bank the aged shade, and lay him gently to rest amid the grasses. Go, spirits of the blest and troops of Grecian bards, shower Lethaeon garlands on the illustrious soul, and point him to the grove where no Fury disturbs, where there is day like ours and air most like to the air of heaven. Thence mayst thou pass to where the better gate of horn o’ercomes the envious ivory, and in the semblance of a dream teach me what thou wert ever wont to teach. Even so the gentle Nymph ordained for Numa in the Arician grot the sacred rites for his observing, so — as the Ausonians believe — had Scipio nightly visions full of Latian Jove, so too was Sulla not without Apollo.

IV. TO SLEEP

O youthful Sleep, gentlest of the gods, by what crime or error of mine have I deserved that I alone should lack thy bounty? Silent are all the cattle, and the wild beasts and the birds, and the curved mountain summits have the semblance of weary slumber, nor do the raging torrents roar as they were wont; the ruffled waves have sunk to rest, and the sea leans against earth's bosom and is still. Seven times now hath the returning moon beheld my fixed and ailing eyes; so often have the lights of Oeta and Paphos revisited me, so oft hath Tithonia passed by my groans, and pitying sprinkled me with her cool whip. Ah! how may I endure? Not if I had the thousand eyes of sacred Argus, which he kept but in alternate watchfulness, nor ever waked in all his frame at once. But now — ah, me! — if some lover through the long hours of night is clasping a girl's entwining arms, and of his own will drives thee from him, come thence, O Sleep! nor do I bid thee shower all the influence of thy wings upon my eyes — that be the prayer of happier folk! — touch me but with thy wand's extremest tip— 'tis enough — or pass over me with lightly hovering step.

V. A LAMENT FOR HIS ADOPTED SON

That this epicedion would have rivalled in length ii. I and v. 3 may be gathered from the prelude, 11. 1-65. The poet appears to have keenly felt the loss of his adopted son, if we may judge from the last lines of this fragment.

Woe is me! for with no hallowed words can I begin, hateful now as I am to Castalia's vocal streams and detested of Phoebus. What rites of yours, Pierian sisters, what altars have I violated? Speak; after the punishment let the crime be known. Have I — set foot in some untrodden grove? or drunk from a forbidden spring? what fault, what error so great that I am atoning? Lo! as with dying arms he clings to my heart, ay, to my very soul, my child is torn away: no child of my own blood, or bearing my name or features; his sire I was not, but look upon my woe and my livid cheeks, and give credence, O ye bereaved, to my lament: for verily bereaved am I. Let fathers come hither, and mothers with open bosom: and let her endure to behold these ashes and this crime, whoever with tottering step has borne her sons to the grave in her own arms beneath full breasts, and beaten a teeming bosom, and quenched with her milk the glowing embers; whoever has plunged into the fire a lad still marked with the bloom of tender youth, and seen the cruel flames creep over the fresh down of the dead boy — let him come and grow weary with me in alternate wailing; his tears will be outdone, and thou wilt feel shame, O Nature. So fierce am I, so senseless in my grief. And while I thus strive, now when thirty days are past, leaning against the tomb I turn my mourning into verse, and contrive discordant strains, and words that are but sobs; the power of my lyre is awake, its spirit brooks not silence. But no wonted bays are on my head, no chaplet's glory on my brow. Behold, the yew-sprays wither on my hair, and the lamentable cypress-leaves exclude the cheerful ivy, nor do I strike the chords with quill of ivory, but with errant fingers tear distractedly my uncertain harp. I delight, ay, alas! delight to pour forth hateful strains, and to lay bare my wretched grief in random utterance. Is such my desert? Must the gods behold me thus with the

garb and music of woe? Must Thebes and young Achilles be put to shame? Will calm utterance flow nevermore from my lips? Yet I am he who was able — how many a time! — to soothe by appeasing words the pain of mother and of sire, and the sorrow of bereavement; I, the gentle consoler of the afflicted, whose voice was heard in the hour of untimely death by spirits departing, I now am at a loss, and seek healing hands and remedies, ay, the most powerful, for my wounds. Now is the time, my friends, whose streaming eyes and pierced breasts I stanch'd; bring me succour, pay your debt of frenzied gratitude. Doubtless when I in sad strains <bewailed> your losses <one among you spake> rebuking: "Thou who dost grieve for others' loss, preserve thy ill-omened tears, and keep thy melancholy song." 'Twas true: exhausted are my powers, I — have no store of speech, my mind can find nought to match so great a blow; too feeble is all my music, no word but is unworthy. Forgive me, lad: 'tis thou dost cloud my mind with sorrow. Ah! verily hard of heart *was* Thracian Orpheus, if he found a song that pleased him when he saw the wound of his dear spouse, and Apollo, if holding the corpse of Linus in his arms he was not mute! Too violent am I called perchance and greedy of woe, and extravagant beyond due measure in my weeping? Who art thou that blamest my groans and tears? Ah! too happy he, and heartless, and ignorant, Fortune, of thy law, who dares to set conditions to lamentation, or adjudge the bounds of grief! Alas! mourning incites to mourn: sooner wilt thou check the rivers that hurry past their banks or stay devouring fire than forbid the sorrowful to lament. Yet let him learn, that severe judge, whoe'er he be, my wound and my complaint.

No chattering favourite was it, bought from a Pharian vessel, no infant skilled in the repartee of his native Nile, with over-ready tongue and impudent wit, that won my heart; mine was he, mine indeed. When he lay on the ground, a new-born babe, I saw him, and with a natal ode I welcomed his anointing, and as with tremulous wailing he claimed his new heritage of air, I set him among living souls. What more did his own parents give? Nay, another birth I gave thee, little one, and thy liberty while yet at the breast, though yet thou didst laugh ungrateful at my gift. Hasty my love may have been, yet with good reason so, lest even a day be lost to so tiny a freedom. And

shall I not then all unkempt hurl my reproaches at the gods and at unjust Tartarus? Shall I — not mourn for thee, dear lad? Whilst thou didst live, I — desired no sons, thou wert my first-born and from thy very birth I bound thee to myself and made thee truly mine; I taught thee sounds and words, and soothed thy complainings and thy hidden hurts, and as thou didst crawl on the ground, I stooped and lifted thee to my kisses, and lovingly in my bosom lulled to sleep thy drooping eyes, and bade sweet slumber take thee. My name was thy first speech, my play thy infant happiness, and my countenance was the source of all thy joy....

FRAGMENT OF A POEM ON THE WAR IN GERMANY

... lights: the gentle wisdom of Nestor-like Crispus, and Fabius Veiento — the purple marks each as eminent, thrice have they filled the recording annals with their names — and Acilius, near neighbour of Caesar's palace.

THE ACHILLEID



Translated by J. H. Mozley

Statius originally intended for this unfinished epic poem to present the life of Achilles from his youth through to his death at Troy, though only one and a half books (1,127 dactylic hexameters) were completed before the poet's death. The remaining text is an account of the Greek hero's early life with Chiron the centaur, and an episode in which Achilles' mother, Thetis, disguises him as a girl on the island of Scyros, before he joins the famous Greek expedition against Troy.

Based upon three references to the poem in the *Silvae*, the *Achilleid* is believed to have been composed between 94 and 96 AD. Statius' primary models are Homer and the poems of the epic cycle, which concern the life of Achilles. The style of the *Achilleid* has been seen as far more reminiscent of Ovid than Virgil, his major influence in the composition of the *Thebaid*. Statius tried to revise the image of the Homeric Achilles with the *Achilleid*, just as Ovid had done for the Virgilian Aeneas in the *Metamorphoses*. While doing this, both Statius and Ovid had also exploited the tension between the accepted epic narrative and competing traditions pertaining to the heroes' lives.



Achilles killing a Trojan prisoner in front of Charun from an Etruscan red-figure calyx-crater, end of the 4th century BC–beginning of the 3rd century BC



Achilles and Chiron — decorated amphora in the British Museum, 500-480 BC.



*Head of Achilles depicted on a 4th-century BC coin from Kremaste, Phthia.
Reverse: Thetis, wearing chiton and holding shield of Achilles..*

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'The Education of Achilles' by James Barry, c. 1772



'Achilles Receiving the Envoys of Agamemnon' by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, c. 1860

BOOK 1A

[1] Tell, O goddess, of great-hearted Aeacides and of the progeny that the Thunderer feared and forbade to inherit his father's heaven. Highly renowned are the warrior's deeds in Maeonian song, but more remains untold: suffer me – for such is my desire – to recount the whole story of the hero, to summon him forth from his hiding-place in Scyros with the Dulichian trumpet, and not to stop short at the dragging of Hector, but to lead the youth through the whole tale of Troy. Only do thou, O Phoebus, if with a worthy draught I drained the former fount, vouchsafe new springs and weave my hair with propitious chaplets; for not as a newcomer do I seek entrance to the Aonian grove, nor are these the first fillets that magnify my brow. The fields of Dirce know it, and Thebes counts my name among her forefathers of old time and with her own Amphion.

[14] But thou whom far before all others the pride of Italy and Greece regards with reverent awe, for whom the laurels twain of poet and warrior-chief flourish in mutual rivalry – already one of them grieves to be surpassed– grant pardon, and allow me anxiously to toil in this dust awhile. Thine is the theme whereat with long nor yet confident preparation I am labouring, and great Achilles plays the prelude unto thee.

[20] The Dardan shepherd had set sail from the Oebalian shore, having wrought sweet havoc in thoughtless Amyclae, and fulfilling the presage of his mother's dream was retracing his guilty way, where Helle deep sunk below the sea and now a Nereid holds sway over the detested waves: when Thetis – ah! never vain are a parent's auguries! – started with terror beneath the glassy flood at the Idaean oars. Without delay she sprang forth from her watery bower, accompanied by her train of sisters: the narrowing shores of Phrixus swam, and the straitened sea had not room for its mistresses.

[30] As soon as she had shaken the brine from off her, and entered the air of heaven: "There is danger to me," said she, "in yonder fleet, and threat of deadly harm; I recognize the truth of Proteus' warnings. Lo! Bellona brings from the vessel amid uplifted torches a new daughter-in-law to Priam; already I see the Ionian and Aegean seas

pressed by a thousand keels; nor does it suffice that all the country of the Grecians conspires with the proud sons of Atreus, soon will my Achilles be sought for by land and sea, ay, and himself will wish to follow them. Why indeed did I suffer Pelion and the stern master's cave to cradle his infant years? There, if I mistake not, he plays, the rogue, at the battle of the Lapiths, and already takes his measure with his father's spear. O sorrow! O fears that came to late to a mother's heart! Could I not, unhappy that I am, when first the timber of Rhoeteum was launched upon my flood, have raised a mighty sea and pursued with a tempest on the deep the adulterous robber's sails and led on all my sisters against him? Even now – but 'tis too late, the outrage hath been wrought in full. Yet will I go, and clinging to the gods of ocean and the right hand of second Jove – nought else remains – entreat him in piteous supplication by the years of Tethys and his aged sire for one single storm."

[51] She spoke, and opportunely beheld the mighty monarch; he was coming from Oceanus his host, gladdened by the banquet, and his countenance suffused with the nectar of the deep: wherefore the winds and tempests are silent and with tranquil song proceed the Tritons who bear his armour and the rock-like sea-monsters and the Tyrrhenian herds, and gambol around and below him, saluting their king; he towers on high above the peaceful waves, urging on his team with his three-pronged spear: frontwise they run at furious speed amid showers of foam, behind they swim and blot out their footprints with their tails:— when Thetis: "O sire and ruler of the mighty deep, seest thou to what uses thou hast made a way o'er the hapless ocean? The crimes of the nations pass by with unmolested sails, since the Pagasaean bark broke through the sanctions of the waters and profaned their hallowed majesty on Jason's quest of plunder. Lo! freighted with another wicked theft, the spoils of hospitality, sails the daring arbiter of unjust Ida, destined to cause what sorrow alas! to heaven and earth, and what to me! Is it thus we requite the joy of the Phrygian triumph, is this the way of Venus, is this her gift to her dear ward? These ships at least – no demigods nor our own Theseus do they carry home – o'erwhelm, if thou still hast any regard for the waters, or give the sea into my power; no cruelty do I purpose; suffer me to fear for my own son. Grant me to drive

away my sorrow, nor let it be thy pleasure that out of all the seas I find a home in but a single coast and the rocks of an Ilian tomb.”

[77] With torn cheeks she made her prayer, and with bare bosom would fain hinder the cerulean steeds. But the ruler of the seas invites her into his chariot, and soothes her thus with friendly words: “Seek not in vain, Thetis, to sink the Dardanian fleet: the fates forbid it, ’tis the sure ordinance of heaven that Europe and Asia should join in bloody conflict, and Jupiter hath issued his decree of war and appointed years of dreary carnage. What prowess of thy son in the Sigean dust, what vast funeral trains of Phrygian matrons shalt thou victoriously behold, when thy Aeacides shall flood the Trojan fields with streaming blood, and anon forbid the choked rivers to flow and check his chariot’s speed with Hector’s corpse and mightily o’erthrow my walls, my useless toil! Cease now to complain of Peleus and thy inferior wedlock: thy child shall be deemed begotten of Jove; nor shalt thou suffer unavenged, but shalt use thy kindred seas: I will grant thee to raise the billows, when the Danaans return and Caphareus shows forth his nightly signals and we search together for the terrible Ulesses.”

[95] He spoke; but she, downcast at the stern refusal, for but now she was preparing to stir up the waters and make war upon the Ilian craft, devised in her mind another plan, and sadly turned her strokes toward the Haemonian land. Thrice strove she with her arms, thrice spurned the clear water with her feet, and the Thessalian waves are washing her snow-white ankles. The mountains rejoice, the marriage-bowers fling open their recesses, and Spercheus in wide, abundant streams flows to meet the goddess and laps her footsteps with his fresh water. She delights not in the scene, but wearies her mind with schemes essayed, and taught cunning by her devoted love seeks out the aged Chiron. His lofty home bores deep into the mountain, beneath the long, overarching vault of Pelion; part had been hollowed out by toil, part worn away by its own age. Yet the images and couches of the gods are shown, and the places that each had sanctified by his reclining and his sacred presence; within are the Centaur’s wide and lofty stalls, far different from those of his wicked brethren. Here are no spears that have tasted human blood, nor ashen clubs broken in festal conflict, nor mixing-bowls shattered upon

kindred foemen, but innocent quivers and mighty hides of beasts. These did he take while yet in the prime of age; but now, a warrior no more, his only toil was to learn herbs that bring health to creatures doubting of their lives, or to describe to his pupil upon his lyre the heroes of old time.

[119] On the threshold's edge he awaited his return from hunting, and was urging the laying of the feast and brightening his abode with lavish fire: when far off the Nereid was seen climbing upward from the shore; he burst forth from the forests – joy speeds his going – and the well-known hoof-beat of the sage rang on the now unwonted plain. Then bowing down to his horse's shoulders he leads her with courtly hand within his humble dwelling and warns her of the cave.

[126] Long time has Thetis been scanning every corner with silent glance: then, impatient of delay, she cries: "Tell me, Chiron, where is my darling? Why spends the boy any time apart from thee? Is it not with reason that my sleep is troubled, and terrible portents from the gods and fearful panics – would they were false! – afflict his mother's heart? For now I behold swords that threaten to pierce my womb, now my arms are bruised with lamentation, now savage beasts assail my breasts; often – ah, horror! – I seem to take my son down to the void of Tartarus, and dip him a second time in the springs of Styx. The Carpathian seer bids me banish these terrors by the ordinance of a magic rite, and purify the lad in secret waters beyond the bound of heaven's vault, where is the farthest shore of Ocean and father Pontus is warmed by the ingliding stars. There awful sacrifices and gifts to gods unknown – but 'tis long to recount all, and I am forbidden; give him to me rather."

[141] Thus spoke his mother in lying speech – nor would he have given him up, had she dared to confess to the old man the soft raiment and dishonourable garb. Then he replies: "Take him, I pray, O best of parents, take him, and assuage the gods with humble entreaty. For thy hopes are pitched too high, and envy needs much appeasing. I add not to thy fears, but will confess the truth: some swift and violent deed – the forebodings of a sire deceive me not – is preparing, far beyond his tender years. Formerly he was wont to endure my anger, and listen eagerly to my commands nor wander far from my cave: now Ossa cannot contain him, nor mighty Pelion and

all the snows of Thessaly. Even the Centaurs often complain to me of plundered homes and herds stolen before their eyes, and that they themselves are driven from field and river; they devise violence and fraud, and utter angry threats. Once when the Thessalian pine bore hither the princes of Argos, I saw the young Alcides and Theseus – but I say no more.”

[158] Cold pallor seized the daughter of Nereus: lo! he was come, made larger by much dust and sweat, and yet for all his weapons and hastened labours still pleasant to the sight; a radiant glow shimmers on his snow-white countenance, and his locks shine more comely than tawny gold. The bloom of youth is not yet changed by new-springing down, a tranquil flame burns in his glance, and there is much of his mother in his look: even as when the hunter Apollo returns from Lycia and exchanges his fierce quiver for the quill. By chance too he is in joyful mood – ah, how joy enhances beauty! – ; beneath Pholoë’s cliff he had stricken a lioness lately delivered and had left her in the empty lair, but had brought the cubs and was making them show their claws. Yet when he sees his mother on the well-known threshold, away he throws them, catches her up and binds her in his longing arms, already violent in his embrace and equal to her in height. Patroclus follows him, bound to him even then by a strong affection, and strains to rival all his mighty doings, well-matched in the pursuits and ways of youth, but far behind in strength, and yet to pass to Pergamum with equal fate.

[178] Straightway with rapid bound he hies him to the nearest river, and freshens in its waters his steaming face and hair: just as Castor enters the shallows of Eurotas on his panting steed, and tricks out anew the weary splendours of his star. The old man marvels as he adorns him, caressing now his breast, now his strong shoulders: her very joy pierces his mother’s heart. Then Chiron prays her to taste the banquet and the gifts of Bacchus, and contriving various amusements for her beguiling at last brings forth the lyre and moves the care-consoling strings, and trying the chords lightly with his finger gives them to the boy. Gladly he sings of the mighty causes of noble deeds: how many behests of his haughty stepmother the son of Amphitryon performed, how Pollux with his glove smote down the cruel Bebryx, with what a grip the son of Aegeus enfolded and

crushed the limbs of the Minoan bull, lastly his own mother's marriage-feast and Pelion trodden by the gods. Then Thetis relaxed her anxious countenance and smiled. Night draws them on to slumber: the huge Centaur lays him down on a stony couch, and Achilles lovingly twines his arms about his shoulders – though his faithful parent is there – and prefers the wonted breast.

[198] But Thetis, standing by night upon the sea-echoing rocks, this way and that divides her purpose, and ponders in what hiding-place she will set her son, in what country she shall choose to conceal him. Nearest is Thrace, but steeped in the passionate love of war; nor does the hardy folk of Macedon please her, nor the sons of Cecrops, sure to excite to noble deeds, nor Sestos and the bay of Abydos, too opportune for ships; she decides to roam the lofty Cyclades. Of these she spurns Myconos and humble Seriphos, and Lemnos cruel to its men, and Delos, that gives all the world a welcome. Of late from the unwarlike palace of Lycomedes had she heard the sound of maiden bands and the echo of their sport along the shore, what time she was sent to follow Aegaeon freed from his stubborn bonds and to count the hundred fetters of the god. This land finds favour, and seems safest to the timid mother. Even so a bird already taking anxious thought, as her deliver draws nigh, on what branch to hang her empty home, here foresees winds, there bethinks her fearfully of snakes, and there of men; at last in her doubt a shady spot finds favour; scarce ahs she alighted on the boughs, and straightway loves the tree.

[217] One more care abides in her mind and troubles the sad goddess, whether she shall carry her son in her own bosom o'er the waves, or use great Triton's aid, whether she shall summon the swift winds to help her, or the Thaumantian that is wont to drink the main. Then she calls out from the waves and bridles with a sharp-edged shell her team of dolphins twain, which Tethys, mighty queen, had nourished for her in an echoing vale beneath the sea; – none throughout all Neptune's watery realm had such renown for their sea-green beauty, nor greater speed of swimming, nor more of human sense; – these she halts in the deep shore-water, lest they take harm from the touch of naked earth. Then in her own arms she carries Achilles, his body utterly relaxed in a boy's slumber, from the rocks of the Haemonian cave down to the placid waters and the

beach that she had bidden be silent; Cynthia lights her way and shines out with full orb. Chiron escorts the goddess, and careless of the sea entreats her speedy return, and hides his moistened eyes and high upon his horse's body gazes out towards them as suddenly they are whirled away, and now – and now are lost to view, where for a short while the foamy marks of their going gleam white and the wake dies away into the watery main. Him destined never more to return to Thessalian Tempe now mournful Pholoë bewails, now cloudy Othrys, and Spercheos with diminished flood and the silent grotto of the sage; the Fauns listen for his boyish songs in vain, and the Nymphs bemoan their long-hoped-for nuptials.

[242] Now day o'erwhelms the stars, and from the low and level main Titan wheels heavenward his dripping steeds, and down from the expanse of air falls the sea that the chariot bore up; but long since had the mother traversed the waves and gained the Scyrian shores, and the weary dolphins had been loosed from their mistress' yoke: when the boy's sleep was stirred, and his opening eyes grew conscious of the inpouring day. In amaze at the light that greets him he asks, where is he, what are these waves, where is Pelion? All he beholds is different and unknown, and he hesitates to recognize his mother. Quickly she caresses him and soothes his fear: "If, dear lad, a kindly lot had brought me the wedlock that it offered, in the fields of heaven should I be holding thee, a glorious star, in my embrace, nor a celestial mother should I fear the lowly Fates or the destinies of earth. But now unequal is thy birth, my son, and only on thy mother's side is the way of death barred for thee; moreover, times of terror draw nigh, and peril hovers about the utmost goal. Retire we then, relax awhile thy mighty spirit, and scorn not this raiment of mine. If the Tirynthian took in his rough hand Lydian wool and women's wands, if it becomes Bacchus to trail a gold-embroidered robe behind him, if Jupiter put on a woman's form, and doubtful sex weakened not the mighty Caeneus, this way, I entreat thee, suffer me to escape the threatening, baleful cloud. Soon will I restore the plains and the fields where the Centaurs roam: by this beauty of thine and the coming joys of youth I pray thee, if for thy sake I endured the earth and an inglorious mate, if at thy birth I fortified thee with the stern waters of Styx – ay, would I had wholly! – take these safe robes

awhile, they will in no wise harm thy valour. Why doest thou turn away? What means that glance? Art thou ashamed to soften thee in this garb? Dear lad, I swear it by my kindred waters, Chiron shall know nought of this.”

[274] So doth she work on his rough heart, vainly cajoling; the thought of his sire and his great teacher oppose her prayer and the rude beginnings of his mighty spirit. Even so, should one try to subdue with earliest rein a horse full of the mettlesome fire of ungoverned youth, he having long delighted in stream and meadow and his own proud beauty, gives not his neck to the yoke, nor his fierce mouth to the bridle, and snorts with rage at passing beneath a master's sway and marvels that he learns another gait.

[283] What god endued the despairing mother with fraud and cunning? What device drew Achilles from his stubborn purpose? It chanced that Scyros was keeping festal day in honour of Pallas, guardian of the shore, and that the sisters, offspring of peace-loving Lycomedes, had on this sacred morn gone forth from their native town – a licence rarely given – to pay tribute of the spring, and bind their grave tresses with the leaf of the goddess and scatter flowers upon her spear. All were of rarest beauty, all clad alike and all in lusty youth, their years of girlish modesty now ended, and maidenhood ripe for the marriage-couch. But as far as Venus by comparison doth surpass the green Nymphs of the sea, or as Diana rises taller by head and shoulders than the Naiads, so doth Deidamia, queen of the lovely choir, outshine and dazzle her fair sisters. The bright colour flames upon her rosy countenance, a more brilliant light is in her jewels, the gold has a more alluring gleam; as beauteous were the goddess herself, would she but lay aside the serpents on her breast, and doff her helm and pacify her brow. When he beheld her far in advance of her attendant train, the lad, ungentle as he was and heart-whole from any touch of passion, stood spellbound and drank in strange fire through all his frame. Nor does the love he has imbibed lie hidden, but the flame pulsating in his inmost being returns to his face and colours the glow upon his cheeks, and as he feels its power runs o'er his body with a light sweat. As when the Massagetæ darken milk-white bowls with blood-red dye, or ivory is stained with purple, so by varying signs of blush and pallor does the

sudden fire betray its presence. He would rush forward and unprovoked fiercely break up the ceremonies of his hosts, reckless of the crowd and forgetful of his years, did not shame restrain him and awe of the mother by his side. As when a bullock, soon to be the sire and leader of a herd, though his horns have not yet come full circle, perceives a heifer of snowy whiteness, the comrade of his pasture, his spirit takes fire, and he foams at the mouth with his first passion; glad at heart the herdsmen watch him and check his fury.

[318] Seizing the moment his mother purposely accosts him: "Is it too hard a thing, my son, to make pretence of dancing and join hands in sport among these maidens? Hast thou aught such 'neath Ossa and the crags of Pelion? O, if it were my lot to match two loving hearts, and to bear another Achilles in my arms!"

[323] He is softened, and blushes for joy, and with sly and sidelong glance repels the robes less certainly. His mother sees him in doubt and willing to be compelled, and casts the raiment o'er him; then she softens his stalwart neck and bows his strong shoulders, and relaxes the muscles of his arms, and tames and orders duly his uncombed tresses, and sets her own necklace about the neck she loves; then keeping his step within the embroidered skirt she teaches him gait and motion and modesty of speech. Even as the waxen images that the artist's thumb will make to live take form and follow the fire and the hand that carves them, such was the picture of the goddess as she transformed her son. Nor did she struggle long; for plenteous charm remains to him though his manhood brook it not, and he baffles beholders by the puzzle of his sex that by a narrow margin hides its secret.

[338] They go forward, and Thetis unsparingly plies her counsels and persuasive words: "Thus then, my son, must thou manage thy gait, thus thy features and thy hands, and imitate thy comrades and counterfeit their ways, lest the king suspect thee and admit thee not to the women's chambers, and the crafty cunning of our enterprise be lost." So speaking she delays not to put correcting touches to his attire. Thus when Hecate returns wearied to her sire and brother from Therapnae, haunt of maidens, her mother bears her company as she goes, and with her own hand covers her shoulders and bared arms, herself arranges the bow and quiver, and pulls down the girt-up robe,

and is proud to trim the disordered tresses.

[349] Straightway she accosts the monarch, and there in the presence of the altars: “Here, O king, “ she says, “I present to thee the sister of my Achilles – seest thou not how proud her glance and like her brother’s? – so high her spirit, she begged for arms and a bow to carry on her shoulders, and like an Amazon to spurn the thought of wedlock. But my son is enough care for me; let her carry the baskets at the sacrifice, do thou control and tame her wilfulness, and keep her to her sex, till the time for marriage come and the end of her maiden modesty; nor suffer her to engage in wanton wrestling-matches, nor to frequent the woodland haunts. Bring her up indoors, in seclusion among girls of her own age; above all remember to keep her from the harbour and the shore. Lately thou sawest the Phrygian sails: already ships that have crossed the sea have learnt treason to mutual loyalties.”

[363] The sire accedes to her words, and receives the disguised Achilles by his mother’s ruse – who can resist when gods deceive? Nay more, he venerates her with a suppliant’s hand, and gives thanks that he was chosen; nor is the band of duteous Scyrian maidens slow to dart keen glances at the face of their new comrade, how she o’ertops them by head and neck, how broad her expanse of breast and shoulders; then they invite her to join the dance and approach the holy rites, and make room for her in their ranks and rejoice to be near her. Just as Idalian birds, cleaving the soft clouds and long since gathered in the sky or in their homes, if a strange bird from some distant region has joined them wing to wing, are at first all filled with amaze and fear; then nearer and nearer they fly, and while yet in the air have made him one of them and hover joyfully around with favouring beat of pinions and lead him to their lofty resting-places.

[379] Long, ere she departs, lingers the mother at the gate, while she repeats advice and implants whispered secrets in his ear and in hushed tones gives her last counsels. Then she plunges into the main, and gazing back swims far away, and entreats with flattering prayers the island-shore: “O land that I love, to whom by timid cunning I have committed the pledge of my anxious care, a trust that is great indeed, mayst thou prosper and be silent, I beg, as Crete was silent for Rhea; enduring honour and everlasting shrines shall gird thee, nor

shalt thou be surpassed by unstable Delos; sacred alike to wind and wave shalt thou be, and clam abode of Nereïds among the shallows of the Cyclades, where the rocks are shattered by Aegean storms, an isle that sailors swear by – only admit no Danaan keels, I beg! ‘Here are only the wands of Bacchus, nought that avails for war;’ that tale bid rumour spread, and while the Dorian armaments make ready and Mavors rages from world to world – he may, for aught I care – let Achilles be the maiden daughter of good Lycomedes.”

[397] Meanwhile avenging Europe, inflamed by war’s sweet frenzy and the monarchs’ complaining entreaties, excites her righteous ire; more earnestly pleads that son of Atreus whose spouse abides at home, and by his telling makes the Ilian crime more grievous: how without aid of Mars or force of arms the daughter of heaven and child of mighty Sparta was taken, and justice, good faith and the gods spurned by one deed of rapine. Is this then Phrygian honour? Is this the intercourse of land with land? What awaits the common folk, when wrong so deadly attacks the foremost chieftains? All races, all ages flock together: nor are they only aroused whom the Isthmian barrier with its rampart fronting on two seas encloses and Malea’s wave-resounding promontory, but where afar the strait of Phrixus sunders Europe and Asia; and the peoples that fringe Abydos’ shore, bound fast by the waters of the upper sea.

[413] The war-fever rises high, thrilling the agitated cities. Temese tames her bronze, the Euboean coast shakes with its dockyards, Mycenae echoes with innumerable forges, Pisa makes new chariots, Nemea gives the skins of wild beasts, Cirrha vies in packing tight the arrow-bearing quivers, Lerna in covering heavy shields with the hides of slaughtered bullocks. Aetolia and fierce Acarnania send infantry to war, Argos collects her squadrons, the pasture-lands of rich Arcadia are emptied, Epiros bridles her swift-footed nurslings, ye shades of Phocis and Aonia grow scant by reason of the javelins, Pylos and Messene strain their fortress-engines. No land but bears its burden; ancestral weapons long renounced are torn from lofty portals, gifts to the gods melt in the flame; gold reft from divine keeping Mars turns to fiercer use. Nowhere are the shady haunts of old: Othrys is lesser grown, lofty Taygetus sinks low, the shorn hills see the light of day. Now the whole forest is afloat: oaks are hewn to

make a fleet, the woods are diminished for oars. Iron is forced into countless uses, for riveting prows, for armour of defence, for bridling chargers, for knitting rough coats of mail by a thousand links, to smoke with blood, to drink deep of wounds, to drive death home in conspiracy with poison; they make the dripping whetstones thin with grinding, and add wrath to sluggish sword-points. No limit is there to the shaping of bows or heaping up of bullets or the charring of stakes or the heightening of helms with crests. Amid such commotion Thessaly alone bewails her indolent repose, and brings a twofold complaint against the Fates, that Peleus is too old and Achilles not yet ripe of age.

[441] Already the lord of war had drained the land of Pelops and the Grecian world, madly flinging aboard both men and horses. All aswarm are the harbours and the bays invisible for shipping, and the moving fleet stirs its own storms and billows; the sea itself fails the vessels, and their canvas swallows up every breath of wind.

[447] Aulis, sacred to Hecate, first gathers together the Danaan fleet, Aulis, whose exposed cliff and long-projecting ridge climb the Euboean sea, coast beloved by the mountain-wandering goddess, and Caphereus, that raises his head hard by against the barking waves. He, when he beheld the Pelasgian ships sail by, thrice thundered from peak to wave, and gave presage of a night of fury. There assembles the armament for Troy's undoing, there the vast array is sworn, while the sun completes an annual course. Then first did Greece behold her own might; then a scattered, dissonant mass took form and feature, and was marshalled under one single lord. Even so does the round hunting-net confine the hidden beasts, and gradually hem them in as the toils are drawn close. They in panic of the torches and the shouting leave their wide pathless haunts, and marvel that their own mountain is shrinking, till from every side they pour into the narrow vale; the herds startle each other, and are tamed by mutual fear; bristly boar and bear and wolf are driven together, and the hind despises the captured lions.

[467] But although the twain Atridae make war in their own cause together, though Sthenelus and Tydeus' son surpass in eager valour their fathers' fame, and Antilochus heeds not his years, and Ajax shakes upon his arm the seven leaders of the herd and the circle vast

as a city-wall, though Ulysses, sleepless in counsel and deeds of arms, joins in the quarrel, yet all the host yearns ardently for the absent Achilles, lovingly they dwell upon Achilles' name, Achilles alone is called for against Hector, him and none other do they speak of as the doom of Priam and of Troy. For who else grew up from infancy crawling on fresh-dug snow in the Haemonian valleys? Whom else did the Centaur take in hand and shape his rude beginnings and tender years? Whose line of ancestry runs nearer heaven? Whom else did a Nereid take by stealth through the Stygian waters and make his fair limbs impenetrable to steel? Such talk do the Grecian cohorts repeat and interchange. The band of chieftains yields before him and gladly owns defeat. So when the pale denizens of heaven flocked into the Phlegraean camp, and already Gradivus was towering to the height of his Odrysian spear and Tritonia raised her Libyan snakes and the Delian strongly bent his mighty bow, Nature in breathless terror stood looking to the Thunderer alone – when would *he* summon the lightnings and the tempests from the clouds, how many thunderbolts would he ask of fiery Aetna?

[491] There, while the princes, surrounded by the mingled multitudes of their folk, hold counsel of times for sailing and for war, Protesilaus amid great tumult rebukes the prophet Calchas and cries – for to him was given the keenest desire to fight, and the glory even then of suffering death the first: “O son of Thestor, forgetful of Phoebus and thy own tripods, when wilt thou open thy god-possessed lips more surely, or why dost thou hide the secret things of Fate? Seest thou how all are amazed at the unknown Aeacides and clamour for him? The Calydonian hero seems nought in the people's eyes, and so too Ajax born of mighty Telamon and lesser Ajax, so do we also: but Mars and the capture of Troy will prove the truth. Slighting their leaders – for shame! – they all love him as a deity of war. Quickly speak, or why are thy locks enwreathed and held in honour? In what coasts lies he hidden? In what land must we seek him? For report has it that he is living neither in Chiron's cave nor in the halls of Peleus his sire. Come, break in upon the gods, harry the fates that lie concealed! Quaff greedily, if ever thou dost, thy draughts of laurelled fire! We have relieved thee of dread arms and cruel swords, and never shall a helm profane thy unwarlike locks, yet

blest shalt thou be and foremost of our chiefs, if of thyself thou doest find great Achilles for the Danaans.”

[514] Long since has the son of Thestor been glancing round about him with excited movements, and by his first pallor betrayed the incoming of the god; soon he rolls fiery, bloodshot eyes, seeing neither his comrades nor the camp, but blind and absent from the scene he now overhears the mighty councils of gods in the upper air, now accosts the prescient birds, now the stern sisters’ threads, now anxiously consults the incense-laden altars, and quickly scans the shooting flames and feeds upon the sacred vapours. His hair streams out, and the fillet totters on his stiffened locks, his head rolls and he staggers in his gait. At last trembling he looses his weary lips from their long bellowings, and his voice has struggled free from the resisting frenzy: “Whither bearest thou, O Nereid, by thy woman’s guile great Chiron’s mighty pupil? Send him hither: why dost thou carry him away? I will not suffer it: mine is he, mine! Thou art a goddess of the deep, but I too am inspired by Phoebus. In what hiding-places triest thou to conceal the destroyer of Asia? I see her all bewildered among the Cyclades, in base stealth seeking out the coast. We are ruined! The accomplice land of Lycomedes finds favour. Ah! horrid deed! see, flowing garments drape his breast. Rend them, boy, rend them, and yield not to thy timid mother. Woe, woe! he is rapt away and is gone! Who is that wicked maiden yonder?”

[536] Here tottering he ceased, the madness lost its force, and with a shudder he collapsed and fell before the altar. Then the Calydonian hero accosts the hesitating Ithacan: “’Tis us that task summons; for I could not refuse to bear thee company, should thy thought so lead thee. Though he be sunk in the echoing caves of Tethys far removed and in the bosom of watery Nereus, thou wilt find him. Do thou but keep alert the cunning and foresight of thy watchful mind, and arouse thy fertile craft: no prophet, methinks, would make bold in perplexity to see the truth before thee.”

[545] Ulysses in joy makes answer: “So may almighty God bring it to pass, and the virgin guardian of thy sire grant to thee! But fickle hope gives me pause; a great enterprise is it indeed to bring Achilles and his arms to our camp, but should the fates say nay, how woeful a

disgrace were it to return! Yet will I not leave unventured the fulfilment of the Danaans' desire. Ay, verily, either the Pelean hero shall accompany me hither, or the truth lies deep indeed and Calchas hath not spoken by Apollo."

[543] The Danai shout applause, and Agamemnon urges on the willing pair; the gathering breaks up, and the dispersing ranks depart with joyful murmurs, even as at nightfall the birds wing their way homeward from the pastures, or kindly Hybla sees the swarms returning laden with fresh honey to their cells. Without delay the canvas of the Ithacan is already calling for a favouring breeze, and the merry crew are seated at the oars.

BOOK 1B

[560] But far away Deidamia – and she alone – had learnt in stolen secrecy the manhood of Aeacides, that lay hid beneath the show of a feigned sex; conscious of guilt concealed there is nought she does not fear, and thinks that her sisters know, but hold their peace. For when Achilles, rough as he was, stood amid the maiden company, and the departure of his mother rid him of his artless bashfulness, straightway although the whole band gathers round him, he chose her as his comrade and assails with new and winning wiles her unsuspecting innocence; her he follows, and persistently besets, toward her he ever and again directs his gaze. Now too zealously he clings to her side, nor does she avoid him, now he pelts her with light garlands, now with baskets that let their burden fall, now with the thyrsus that harms her not, or again he shows her the sweet strings of the lyre he knows so well, and the gentle measures and songs of Chiron's teaching, and guides her hand and makes her fingers strike the sounding harp, now as she sings he makes a conquest of her lips, and binds her in his embrace, and praises her amid a thousand kisses. With pleasure does she learn of Pelion's summit and of Aeacides, and hearing the name and exploits of the youth is spellbound in constant wonder, and sings of Achilles in his very presence.

[580] She in her turn teaches him to move his strong limbs with more modest grace and to spin out the unwrought wool by rubbing with his thumb, and repairs the distaff and the skeins that his rough hand has damaged; she marvels at the deep tones of his voice, how he shuns all her fellows and pierces her with too-attentive gaze and at all times hangs breathless on her words; and now he prepares to reveal the fraud, but she like a fickle girl avoids him, and will not allow him to confess. Even so beneath his mother Rhea's rule the young prince of Olympus gave treacherous kisses to his sister; he was still her brother and she thought no harm, until the reverence for their common blood gave way, and the sister feared a lover's passion.

[592] At length the timorous Nereid's cunning was laid bare. There stood a lofty grove, scene of the rites of Agenorean Bacchus, a grove

that reached to heaven; within its shade the pious matrons were wont to renew the recurrent three-yearly festival, and to bring torn animals of the herd and uprooted saplings, and to offer to the god the frenzy wherein he took delight. The law bade males keep far away; the reverend monarch repeats the command, and makes proclamation that no man may draw nigh the sacred haunt. Nor is that enough; a venerable priestess stands at the appointed limit and scans the approaches, lest any defiler come near in the train of women; Achilles laughed silently to himself. His comrades wonder at him as he leads the band of virgins and moves his mighty arms with awkward motion – his own sex and his mother's counterfeit alike become him. No more is Deidamia the fairest of her company, and as she surpasses her own sisters, so does she herself own defeat compared with proud Aeacides. But when he let the fawn-skin hang from his shapely neck, and with ivy gathered up its flowing folds, and bound the purple fillet high upon his flaxen temples, and with powerful hand made the enwreathed missile quiver, the crowd stood awestruck, and leaving the sacred rites are fain to throng about him, uplifting their bowed heads to gaze. Even so Euhius, what time he has relaxed at Thebes his martial spirit and frowning brow, and sated his soul with the luxury of his native land, takes chaplet and mitre from his locks, and arms the green thyrsus for the fray, and in more martial guise sets out to meet his Indian foes.

[619] The Moon in her rosy chariot was clinging to the height of mid-heaven, when drowsy Sleep glided down with full sweep of his pinions to earth and gathered a silent world to his embrace: the choirs reposed, the stricken bronze awhile was mute, when Achilles, parted in solitude from the virgin train, thus spoke with himself: "How long wilt thou endure the precepts of thy anxious mother, and waste the first flower of thy manhood in this soft imprisonment? No weapons of war mayst thou brandish, no beasts mayst thou pursue. Oh! for the plains and valleys of Haemonia! Lookest thou in vain, Spercheus, for my swimming, and for my promised tresses? Or hast thou no regard for the foster-child that has deserted thee? Am I already spoken of as borne to the Stygian shades afar, and does Chiron in solitude bewail my death? Thou, O Patroclus, now does aim my darts, dost bend my bow and mount the team that was nourished for me; but I have learnt

to fling wide my arms as I grasp the vine-wands, and to spin the distaff-thread – ah! shame and vexation to confess it! Nay more, night and day thou dost dissemble the love that holds thee, and thy passion for the maid of equal years. How long wilt thou conceal the wound that galls thy heart, nor even in love – for shame! – prove thy own manhood?”

[640] So he speaks; and in the thick darkness of the night, rejoicing that the unstirring silence gives timely aid to his secret deeds, he gains by force his desire, and with all his vigour strains her in a real embrace; the whole choir of stars beheld from on high, and the horns of the young moon blushed red. She indeed filled the grove and mountain with her cries, but the train of Bacchus, dispelling slumber’s cloud, deemed it the signal for the dance; on every side the familiar shout arises, and Achilles once more brandishes the thyrsus; yet first with friendly speech he solaces the anxious maid: “I am he – why fearest thou? – whom my cerulean mother bore wellnigh to Jove, and sent to find my nurture in the woods and snows of Thessaly. Nor had I endured this dress and shameful garb, had I not seen thee on the seashore; ’twas for thee I did submit, for thee I carry skeins and bear the womanly timbrel. Why dost thou weep who art made daughter-in-law of mighty ocean? Why does thou moan who shalt bear valiant grandsons to Olympus? But thy father – Scyros shall be destroyed by fire and sword and these walls shall be in ruins and the sport of wanton winds, ere thou pay by cruel death for my embraces: not so utterly am I subject to my mother.”

[662] Horror-struck was the princess at such dark happenings, albeit long since she had suspected his good faith, and shuddered at his presence, and his countenance was changed as he made confession. What is she to do? Shall she bear the tale of her misfortune to her father, and ruin both herself and her lover, who perchance would suffer untimely death? And still there abode within her breast the love so long deceived. Silent is she in her grief, and dissembles the crime that both now share alike; her nurse alone she resolves to make a partner in deceit, and she, yielding to the prayers of both, assents. With secret cunning she conceals the rape and the swelling womb and the burden of the months of ailing, till Lucina brought round by token the appointed season, her course now fully run, and gave

deliverance of her child.

[675] And now the Laertian bark was threading the winding ways of the Aegean, while the breezes changed one for another the countless Cyclades; already Paros and Olearos are hid, now they skirt lofty Lemnos and behind them Bacchic Naxos is lost to view, while Samos grows before them; now Delos darkens the deep, and there from the tall stern they pour cups of libation, and pray that he oracle be true and Calchas undeceived. The Wielder of the Bow heard them, and from the top of Cynthus sent a zephyr flying and gave the doubting ones the good omen of a bellying sail. The ship sails o'er the sea untroubled; for the Thunderer's high commands suffered not Thetis to overturn the sure decrees of Fate, faint as he was with tears, and foreboding much because she could not excite the main and straightway pursue the hated Ulysses with all her winds and waves.

[689] Already Phoebus, stooping low upon the verge of Olympus, was sending forth broken rays, and promising to his panting steeds the yielding shore of Ocean, when rocky Scyros rose aloft; the Laertian chieftain from the stern let out all sail to make it, and bade his crew resume the deep and with their oars supply the failing zephyrs. Nearer they draw, and more undoubtedly, more surely was it Scyros, and Tritonia above, the guardian of the tranquil shore. They disembark, and venerate the power of the friendly goddess, Aetolian and Ithacan alike. Then the prudent hero, lest they should frighten the hospitable walls with sudden throng, bids his crew remain upon the ship; he himself with trusty Diomedes ascends the heights. But already Abas, keeper of the coastal tower, had gone before them and given tidings to the king, that unknown sails, though Greek, were drawing nigh to land. Forward they go, like two wolves leagued together on a winter's night: though their cubs' hunger and their own assaults them, yet do they utterly dissemble ravening rage, and go slinking on their way, lest the alertness of dogs announce a foe and warn the anxious herdsmen to keep vigil.

[1709] So with slow pace the heroes move, and with mutual converse tread the open plain that lies between the harbour and the high citadel; first keen Tydides speaks: "By what means now are we preparing to search out the truth? For in perplexity of mind have I long been pondering why thou didst buy those unwarlike wands and

cymbals in the city marts, and didst bring hither Bacchic hides and turbans, and fawn-skins decked with patterns of gold. Is it with these thou wilt arm Achilles to be the doom of Priam and the Phrygians?"

[718] To him with a smile and somewhat less stern of look the Ithacan replied: "These things, I tell thee, if only he be lurking among the maidens in Lycomedes' palace, shall draw the son of Peleus to the fight, ay, self-confessed! Remember thou to bring them all quickly from the ship, when it is time, and to join to these gifts a shield that is beautiful with carving and rough with work of gold; this spear will suffice; let the good trumpeter Agyrtes be with thee, and let him bring a hidden bugle for a secret purpose."

[726] He spoke and spied the king in the very threshold of the gate, and displaying the olive first announced his peaceful purpose: "Loud report, I ween, hath long since reached thy ears, O gentle monarch, of that fierce war which now is shaking both Europe and Asia. If perchance the chieftains' names have been borne hither, in whom the avenging son of Atreus trusts, here beholdest thou him whom great-hearted Tydeus begot, mightier even than so great a sire, and I am Ulysses the Ithacan chief. The cause of our voyage – for why should I fear to confess all to thee, who art a Greek and of all men most renowned by sure report? – is to spy out the approaches to Troy and her hated shores, and what their schemes may be."

[737] Ere he had finished the other broke in upon him: "May Fortune assist thee, I pray, and propitious gods prosper that enterprise! Now honour my roof and pious home by being my guests." Therewith he leads them within the gate. Straightway numerous attendants prepare the couches and the tables. Meanwhile Ulysses scans and searches the palace with his gaze, if anywhere he can find trace of a tall maiden or a face suspect for its doubtful features; uncertainly he wanders idly in the galleries and, as though in wonder, roams the whole house through; just as yon hunter, having come upon his prey's undoubted haunts, scours the fields with his silent Molossian hound, till he behold his foe stretched out in slumber 'neath the leaves and his jaws resting on the turf.

[750] Long since has a rumour been noised throughout the secret chamber where the maidens had their safe abode, that Pelasgian chiefs are come, and a Grecian ship and its mariners have been made

welcome. With good reason are the rest affrighted; but Pelides scarce conceals his sudden joy, and eagerly desires even as he is to see the newly-arrived heroes and their arms. Already the noise of princely trains fills the palace, and the guests are reclining on gold-embroidered couches, when at their sire's command his daughters and their chaste companions join the banquet; they approach, like unto Amazons on the Maeotid shore, when, having made plunder of Scythian homesteads and captured strongholds of the Getae, they lay aside their arms and feast. Then indeed does Ulysses with intent gaze ponder carefully both forms and features, but night and the lamps that are brought in deceive him, and their stature is hidden as soon as they recline. One nevertheless with head erect and wandering gaze, one who preserves no sign of virgin modesty, he marks, and with sidelong glance points out to his companion. But if Deidamia, to warn the hasty youth, had not clasped him to her soft bosom, and ever covered with her own robe his bare breast and naked arms and shoulders, and many a time forbidden him to start up from the couch and ask for wine, and replaced the golden hair-band on his brow, Achilles had even then been revealed to the Argive chieftains.

[773] When hunger was assuaged and the banquet had twice and three times been renewed, the monarch first addresses the Achaeans, and pledges them with the wine-cup: "Ye famous heroes of the Argolic race, I envy, I confess, your enterprise; would that I too were of more valiant years, as when I utterly subdued the Dolopes who attacked the shores of Scyros, and shattered on the sea those keels that ye beheld on the forefront of my lofty walls, tokens of my triumph! At least if I had offspring that I would send to war, - but now ye see for yourselves my feeble strength and my dear children: ah, when will these numerous daughters give me grandsons?"

[784] He spoke, and seizing the moment crafty Ulysses made reply: "Worthy indeed is the object of thy desire; for who would not burn to see the countless peoples of the world and various chieftains and princes with their trains? All the might and glory of powerful Europe hath sworn together willing allegiance to our righteous arms. Cities and fields alike are empty, we have spoiled the lofty mountains, the whole sea lies hidden beneath the far-spread shadow of our sails; fathers give weapons, youths snatch them and are gone beyond

recall. Never was offered to the brave such an opportunity for high renown, never had valour so wide a field of exercise.”

[794] He sees him all attentive and drinking in his words with vigilant ear, though the rest are alarmed and turn aside their downcast eyes, and he repeats: “Whoever hath pride of race and ancestry, whoever hath sure javelin and valiant steed, or skill of bow, all honour there awaits him, there is the strife of mighty names: scarce do timorous mothers hold back or troops of maids; ah! doomed to barren years and hated of the gods is he whom this new chance of glory passes by in idle sloth.”

[802] Up from the couches had he sprung, had not Deidamia, watchfully giving the sign to summon all her sisters, left the banquet clasping him in her arms; yet still he lingers looking back at the Ithacan, and goes out from the company the last of all. Ulysses indeed leaves unsaid somewhat of his purposed speech, yet adds a few words: “But do thou abide in deep and tranquil peace, and find husbands for thy beloved daughters, whom fortune has given thee, goddess-like in their starry countenances. What awe touched me anon and holds me silent? Such charm and beauty joined to manliness of form!”

[812] The sire replies: “What if thou couldst see them performing the rites of Bacchus, or about the altars of Pallas? Ay, and thou shalt, if perchance the rising south wind prove a laggard.” They eagerly accept his promise, and hope inspires their silent prayers. All else in Lycomedes’ palace are at rest in peaceful quiet, their troubles laid aside, but to the cunning Ithacan the night is long; he yearns for the day and brooks not slumber.

[819] Scarce had day dawned, and already the son of Tydeus accompanied by Agyrtes was present bringing the appointed gifts. The maids of Scyros too went forth from their chamber and advanced to display their dances and promised rites to the honoured strangers. Brilliant before the rest is the princess with Pelides her companion: even as beneath the rocks of Aetna in Sicily Diana and bold Pallas and the consort of the Elysian monarch shine forth among the nymphs of Enna. Already they begin to move, and the Ismenian pipe gives signal to the dancers; four times they beat the cymbals of Rhea, four times the maddening drums, four times they trace their manifold

windings. Then together they raise and lower their wands, and complicate their steps, now in such fashion as the Curetes and devout Samothracians use, now turning to face each other in the Amazonian comb, now in the ring wherein the Delian sets the Laconian girls a-dancing, and whirls them shouting her praises into her own Amyclae. Then indeed, then above all is Achilles manifest, caring neither to keep his turn nor to join arms; then more than ever does he scorn the delicate step, the womanly attire, and breaks the dance and mightily disturbs the scene. Even so did Thebes already sorrowing behold Pentheus spurning the wands and the timbrels that his mother welcomed.

[841] The troop disperses amid applause, and they seek again their father's threshold, where in the central chamber of the palace the son of Tydeus had long since set out gifts that should attract maidens' eyes, the mark of kindly welcome and the guerdon of their toil; he bids them choose, nor does the peaceful monarch say them nay. Alas! how simple and untaught, who knew not the cunning of the gifts nor Grecian fraud nor Ulysses' many wiles! Thereupon the others, prompted by nature and their ease-loving sex, try the shapely wands or the timbrels that answer to the blow, and fasten jewelled band around their temples; the weapons they behold, but think them a gift to their mighty sire. But the bold son of Aeacus no sooner saw before him the gleaming shield enchased with battle-scenes – by chance too it shone red with the fierce stains of war – and leaning against he spear, than he shouted loud and rolled his eyes, and his hair rose up from his brow; forgotten were his mother's words, forgotten his secret love, and Troy fills all his breast. As a lion, torn from his mother's dugs, submits to be tamed and lets his mane be combed, and learns to have awe of man and not to fly into a rage save when bidden, yet if but once the steel has glittered in his sight, his fealty is forsworn, and his tamer becomes his foe: against him he first raven, and feels shame to have served a timid lord. But when he came nearer, and the emulous brightness gave back his features and he saw himself mirrored in the reflecting gold, he thrilled and blushed together.

[866] Then quickly went Ulysses to his side and whispered: "Why dost thou hesitate? We know thee, thou art the pupil of the half-beast

Chiron, thou art the grandson of the sky and sea; thee the Dorian fleet, thee thy own Greece awaits with standards uplifted for the march, and the very walls of Pergamum totter and sway for thee to overturn. Up! delay no more! Let perfidious Ida grow pale, let they father delight to hear these tidings, and guileful Thetis feel shame to have so feared for thee.”

[874] Already was he stripping his body of the robes, when Agyrtes, so commanded, blew a great blast upon the trumpet: the gifts are scattered, and they flee and fall with prayers before their sire and believe that battle is joined. But from his breast the raiment fell without his touching, already the shield and puny spear are lost in the grasp of his hand – marvellous to believe! – and he seemed to surpass by head and shoulders the Ithacan and the Aetolian chief: with a sheen so awful does the sudden blaze of arms and the martial fire dazzle the palace-hall. Mighty of limb, as though forthwith summoning Hector to the fray, he stand in the midst of the panic-stricken house: and the daughter of Peleus is sought in vain.

[885] But Deidamia in another chamber bewailed the discovery of the fraud, and as soon as he heard her loud lament and recognized the voice that he knew so well, he quailed and his spirit was broken by his hidden passion. He dropped the shield, and turning to the monarch’s face, while Lycomedes is dazed by the scene and distraught by the strange portent, just as he was, in naked panoply of arms, he thus bespeaks him: “’Twas I, dear father, I whom bounteous Thetis gave thee – dismiss thy anxious fears! – long since did this high renown await thee; ’tis thou who wilt send Achilles, long sought for, to the Greeks, more welcome to me than my might sire – if it is right so to speak – and than beloved Chiron. But, if thou wilt, give me thy mind awhile, and of thy favour hear these words: Peleus and Thetis thy guest make thee the father-in-law of their son, and recount their kindred deities on either side; they demand one of thy train of virgin daughters: doest thou give her? or seem we a mean and coward race? Thou dost not refuse. Join then our hands, and make the treaty, and pardon thy own kin. Already hath Deidamia been known to me in stolen secrecy; for how could she have resisted these arms of mine, how once in my embrace repel my might? Bid me atone that deed: I lay down these weapons and restore them to the

Pelasgians, and I remain here. Why these angry cries? Why is thy aspect changed? Already art thou my father-in-law” – he placed the child before his feet, and added: “and already a grandsire! How often shall the pitiless sword be plied! We are a multitude!”

[910] Then the Greeks too and Ulysses with his persuasive prayer entreat by the holy rites and the sworn word of hospitality. He, though moved by the discovery of his dear daughter’s wrong and the command of Thetis, though seeming to betray the goddess and so grave a trust, yet fears to oppose so many destinies and delay the Argive war – even were he fain, Achilles had spurned even his mother then. Nor is he unwilling to take unto himself so great a son-in-law: he is won. Deidamia comes shamefast from her dark privacy, nor in her despair believes at first his pardon, and puts forward Achilles to appease her sire.

[921] A messenger is sent to Haemonia to give Peleus full tidings of these great events, and to demand ships and comrades for the war. Moreover, the Scyrian prince launches two vessels for his son-in-law, and makes excuse to the Achaeans for so poor a show of strength. Then the day was brought to its end with feasting, and at last the bond was made known to all, and conscious night joined the now fearless lovers.

[927] Before her eyes new wars and Xanthus and Ida pass, and the Argolis fleet, and she imagines the very waves and fears the coming of the dawn; she flings herself about her new lord’s beloved neck, and at last clasping his limbs gives way to tears: “Shall I see thee again, and lay myself on this breast of thine, O son of Aeacus? Wilt thou deign once more to look upon thy offspring? Or wilt thou proudly bring back spoils of captured Pergamum and Teucrian homes and wish to forget where thou didst hide thee as a maid? What should I entreat, or alas! what rather fear? How can I in my anxiety lay a behest on thee, who have scarce time to weep? One single night has given and grudged thee to me! Is this the season for our espousals? Is this free wedlock? Ah! those stolen sweets! that cunning fraud! Ah! how I fear! Achilles is given to me only to be torn away. Go! for I would not dare to stay such mighty preparations; go, and be cautious, and remember that the fears of Thetis were not vain; go, and good luck be with thee, and come back mine!

[944] “Yes too bold is my request: soon the fair Trojan dames will sigh for thee with tears and beat their breasts, and pray that they may offer their necks to thy fetters, and weigh thy couch against their homes, or Tyndaris herself will please thee, too much belauded for her incestuous rape. But I shall be a story to thy henchmen, the tale of a lad’s first fault, or I shall be disowned and forgotten. Nay, come, take me as thy comrade; why should I not carry the standards of Mars with thee? Thou dost carry with me the wands and holy things of Bacchus, though ill-fated Troy believe it not. Yet this babe, whom thou dost leave as my sad solace – keep him at least within thy heart, and grant this one request, that no foreign wife bear thee a child, that no captive woman give unworthy grandsons to Thetis.”

[956] As thus she speaks, Achilles, moved to compassion himself, comforts her, and gives her his sworn oath, and pledges it with tears, and promises her on his return tall handmaidens and spoils of Ilium and gifts of Phrygian treasure. The fickle breezes swept his words unfulfilled away.

BOOK 2

[1] Day arising from Ocean set free the world from dank enfolding shades, and the father of the flashing light upraised his torch still dimmed by the neighbouring gloom and moist with sea-water not yet shaken off. And now all behold Aeacides, his shoulders stripped of the scarlet robe, and glorious in those very arms he first had seized – for the wind is calling and his kindred seas are urging him – and quake before the youthful chieftain, not daring to remember aught; so wholly changed to the sight hath he come back, as though he had ne’er experienced the shores of Scyros, but were embarking from the Pelian cave. Then duly – for so Ulysses counselled – he does sacrifice to the gods and the waters and south winds, and venerates with a bull the cerulean king below the waves and Nereus his grandsire: his mother is appeased with garlanded heifer. Thereupon casting the swollen entrails on the salt foam he addresses her: “Mother, I have obeyed thee, though thy commands were hard to bear; too obedient have I been: now they demand me, and I go to the Trojan war and the Argolic fleet.” So speaking he leapt into the bark, and was swept away far from the neighbourhood of land by the whistling south wind; already lofty Scyros beings to gather mist about her, and to fade from sight over the long expanse of sea.

[23] Far away on the summit of a tower with weeping sisters round her his wife leaned forth, holding her precious charge, who bore the name of Pyrrhus, and with her eyes fixed on the canvas sailed herself upon the sea, and all alone still saw the vessel. He too turned his gaze aside to the walls he held dear, he thinks upon the widowed home and the sobs of her he had left: the hidden passion glows again within his heart, and martial ire gives place. The Laertian hero perceives him sorrowing, and draws nigh to influence him with gentle words: “Was it thou, O destined destroyer of great Troy, whom Danaan fleets and divine oracles are demanding, and War aroused is awaiting with unbarred portals – was it thou whom a crafty mother profaned with feminine robes, and trusted yonder hiding-place with so great a secret, and hoped the trust was sure? O too anxious, O too true a mother! Could such valour lie inert and

hidden, that scarce hearing the trumpet-blast fled from Thetis and companions and the heart's unspoken passion? Nor is it due to us that thou comest to the war, and compliest with our prayers; thou wouldst have come – ,”

[42] He spoke, and thus the Aeacian hero takes up the word: “‘Twere long to set forth the causes of my tarrying and my mother's crime; this sword shall make excuse for Scyros and my dishonourable garb, the reproach of destiny. Do thou rather, while the sea is peaceful and the sails enjoy the zephyr, tell how the Danaans began so great a war: I would fain draw straightway from thy words a righteous anger.”

[49] Then the Ithacan, tracing far back the beginning of the tale: “A shepherd, they say – if we believe such things – was chosen in Hector's domain of Ida to end a strife of beauty, and while he kept the goddesses anxious doubt looked not with friendly eye upon Minerva's frowning countenance nor on the consort of the heavenly ruler, but gazed overmuch on Dione alone. And verily that quarrel arose in thy own glades, at a gathering of the gods, when pleasant Pelion made marriage-feast for Peleus, and thou even then wert promised to our armament. Wrath thrills the vanquished ones: the judge demands his fateful reward, and compliant Amyclae is shown to the ravisher. He cuts down the Phrygian groves, the secret haunts of the turret-crowned mother, and flings down pines that fear to fall to earth, and borne o'er the sea to Achaean lands he plunders the marriage-chamber of his host the son of Atreus – ah! shame and pity on proud Europe! – and exulting in Helen puts to sea and brings home to Pergamum the spoils of Argos. Then, as the rumours spread far and wide through the cities, of our own will, none urging us, we gather, who could endure the unlawful, crafty breaking of the marriage-bond, or a consort carried off in unresisted rape, as though a beast of the flock or herd, would shake even a valiant heart. Masterful Agenor endured not the treachery of the gods, but went in quest of sacred lowings and Europa riding on a mighty god, and scorned the Thunderer as a son-in-law; Aeëtes endured not the rape of his daughter from the Scythian shore, but with ships and steel pursued the princes and the vessel fated to join the stars: shall we endure a Phrygian eunuch hovering about the coasts and harbours of

Argos with his incestuous bark? Are our horses and men so utterly vanished? Are the seas so impassable to Greeks? What if someone now were to carry of Deidamia from her native shores, and tear her from her lonely chamber in dire dismay and crying on the name of great Achilles?"

[84] His hand flew to the sword-hilt, and a dark flush surged over his face: Ulysses was silent and content.

[86] Then spoke Oenides: "Nay, O thou worthiest progeny of heaven, tell us, thy admiring friends, of the ways in which thy spirit first was trained, and as the vigour of thy youth increased what stirring themes of glory Chiron was wont to recount to thee, and how thy valour grew, by what arts he made strong thy limbs or fired thy courage; let it be worthy while to have sought Scyros over long leagues of sea, and to have first shown weapons to those arms of thine."

[94] Who would find it hard to tell of his own deeds? Yet he begins modestly, somewhat uncertain and more like one compelled: "Even in my years of crawling infancy, when the Thessalian sage received me on his stark mountain-side, I am said to have devoured no wonted food, nor to have sated my hunger at the nourishing breast, but to have gnawed the tough entrails of lions and the bowels of a half-slain she-wolf. That was my first bread, that the bounty of joyous Bacchus, in such wise did that father of mine feed me. Then he taught me to go with him through pathless deserts, dragging me on with mighty stride, and to laugh at sight of the wild beasts, nor tremble at the shattering rocks by rushing torrents or at the silence of the lonely forest. Already at that time weapons were in my hand and quivers on my shoulders, the love of steel grew apace within me, and my skin was hardened by much sun and frost; nor were my limbs weakened by soft couches, but I shared the hard rock with my master's mighty frame.

[110]"Scarce had my raw youth turned the wheel of twice six years, when already he made me outpace swift hinds and Lapith steeds and running overtake the flung dart; often Chiron himself, while yet he was swift of foot, chased me at full gallop with headlong speed o'er all the plains, and when I was exhausted by roaming over the meads he praised me joyously and hoisted me upon his back. Often too in

the first freezing of the streams he would bid me go upon them with light step nor break the ice. These were my boyhood glories. Why now should I tell thee of the woodland battles and of the glades that know my fierce shout no more? Never would he suffer me to follow unwarlike does through the pathless glens of Ossa, or lay low timid lynxes with my spear, but only to drive angry bears from their resting-places, and boars with lightning thrust; or if anywhere a mighty tiger lurked or a lioness with her cubs in some secret lair upon the mountain-side, he himself, seated in his vast cave, awaited my exploits, if perchance I should return bespattered with dark blood; nor did he admit me to his embrace before he had scanned my weapons.

[129] "And already I was being prepared for the armed tumults of the neighbouring folk, and no fashion of savage warfare passed me by. I learnt how the Paeonians whirl and fling their darts and the Macetae their javelins, with how fierce a rush the Sarmatian plies his pike and the Getan his falchion, how the Gelonian draws his bow, and how the Balearic wielder of the pliant thong keeps the missile swinging round with balanced motion, and as he swings it marks out a circle in the air. Scarce could I recount all my doings, successful though they were; now he instructs me to span huge dykes by leaping, now to climb and grasp the airy mountain-peak, with what stride to run upon the level, how to catch flung stones in mimic battle on my shielded arm, to pass through burning houses, and to check flying four-horse teams on foot.

[145] "Spercheus, I remember was flowing with rapid current, fed full with constant rains and melted snows and carrying on its flood boulders and living trees, when he sent me in, there were the waves rolled fiercest, and bade me stand against them and hurl back the swelling billows that he himself could scarce have borne, though he stood to face them with so many a limb. I strove to stand, but the violence of the stream and the dizzy panic of the broad spate forced me to give ground; he loomed o'er me from above and fiercely threatened, and flung taunts to shame me. Nor did I depart till he gave me word, so far did the lofty love of fame constrain me, and my toils were not too hard with such a witness. For to fling the Oebalian quoit far out of sight into the clouds, or to practise the holds of the

sleek wrestling-bout, and to scatter blows with the boxing-gloves were sport and rest to me: nor laboured I more therein that when I struck with my quill the sounding strings, or told the wondrous fame of heroes of old.

[159] “Also did he teach me of juices and the grasses that succour disease, what remedy will staunch too fast a flow of blood, what will lull to sleep, what will close gaping wounds; what plague should be checked by the knife, what will yield to herbs; and he implanted deep within my heart the precepts of divine justice, whereby he was wont to give revered laws to the tribes that dwelt on Pelion, and tame his own twy-formed folk. So much do I remember, friends, of the training of my earliest years, and sweet is their remembrance; the rest my mother knows.”

THE END

The Latin Texts



The Alban Mount (Monte Cavo), near Rome — Domitian established the Alban Festival here in honour of Minerva, where dramatic competitions were held every year. Statius won the contest three times, receiving the golden crown from the hand of the Emperor himself.

LIST OF LATIN TEXTS



In this section of the eBook, readers can view the original Latin texts of Statius' works. You may wish to Bookmark this page for future reference.

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Liber Primus

Fraternas acies alternaque regna profanis
decertata odiis sontesque euoluere Thebas
Pierius menti calor incidit. unde iubetis
ire, deae? gentisne canam primordia dirae,
Sidonios raptus et inexorabile pactum 5
legis Agenoreae scrutantemque aequora Cadmum?
longa retro series, trepidum si Martis operti
agricolam infandis condentem proelia sulcis
expediam penitusque sequar, quo carmine muris
iusserit Amphion Tyriis accedere montes, 10
unde graues irae cognata in moenia Baccho,
quod saeuae Iunonis opus, cui sumpserit arcus
infelix Athamas, cur non expauerit ingens
Ionium socio casura Palaemone mater.
atque adeo iam nunc gemitus et prospera Cadmi 15
praeteriisse sinam: limes mihi carminis esto
Oedipodae confusa domus, quando Itala nondum
signa nec Arctoos ausim spirare triumphos
bisque iugo Rhenum, bis adactum legibus Histrum
et coniurato deiectos uertice Dacos 20
aut defensa prius uix pubescentibus annis
bella Iouis. tuque, o Latiae decus addite famae
quem noua maturi subeuntem exorsa parentis
aeternum sibi Roma cupit (licet artior omnes
limes agat stellas et te plaga lucida caeli, 25
Pliadum Boreaeque et hiulci fulminis expers,
sollicitet, licet ignipedum frenator equorum
ipse tuis alte radiantem crinibus arcum
imprimat aut magni cedat tibi Iuppiter aequa
parte poli), maneat hominum contentus habenis, 30
undarum terraeque potens, et sidera dones.
tempus erit, cum Pierio tua fortior oestro
facta canam: nunc tendo chelyn; satis arma referre
Aonia et geminis sceptrum exitiale tyrannis

nec furiis post fata modum flammasque rebelles 35
seditione rogi tumulisque carentia regum
funera et egestas alternis mortibus urbes,
caerula cum rubuit Lernaeo sanguine Dirce
et Thetis arentes adsuetum stringere ripas
horruit ingenti uenientem Ismenon aceruo. 40
quem prius heroum, Clio, dabis? inmodicum irae
Tydea? laurigeri subitos an uatis hiatus?
urguet et hostilem propellens caedibus amnem
turbidus Hippomedon, plorandaque bella proterui
Arcados atque alio Capaneus horrore canendus. 45

impia iam merita scrutatus lumina dextra
merserat aeterna damnatum nocte pudorem
Oedipodes longaue animam sub morte trahebat.
illum indulgentem tenebris imaeque recessu
sedis inaspectos caelo radiisque penates 50
seruantem tamen adsiduis circumuolat alis
saeua dies animi, scelerumque in pectore Dirae.
tunc uacuos orbes, crudum ac miserabile uitae
supplicium, ostentat caelo manibusque cruentis
pulsat inane solum saeuaque ita uoce precatur: 55
‘di, sontes animas angustaque Tartara poenis
qui regitis, tuque umbrifero Styx liuida fundo,
quam uideo, multumque mihi consueta uocari
adnue, Tisiphone, peruersaque uota secunda:
si bene quid merui, si me de matre cadentem 60
fouisti gremio et traiectione uulnere plantas
firmasti, si stagna peti Cirrhaea bicorni
interfusa iugo, possem cum degere falso
contentus Polybo, trifidaeque in Phocidos arto
longaeuum implicui regem secuique trementis 65
ora senis, dum quaero patrem, si Sphingos iniquae
callidus ambages te praemonstrante resolui,
si dulces furias et lamentabile matris
conubium gauisus ini noctemque nefandam
saepe tuli natosque tibi, scis ipsa, paraui, 70
mox audis poenae digitis caedentibus ultro

incubui miseraque oculos in matre reliqui:
exaudi, si digna precor quaeque ipsa furenti
subiceres. orbum uisu regnisque carentem
non regere aut dictis maerentem flectere adorti, 75
quos genui quocumque toro; quin ecce superbi
— pro dolor! — et nostro iamdudum funere reges
insultant tenebris gemitusque odere paternos.
hisne etiam funestus ego? et uidet ista deorum
ignauus genitor? tu saltem debita uindex 80
huc ades et totos in poenam ordire nepotes.
indue quod madidum tabo diadema cruentis
unguibus abripui, uotisque instincta paternis
i media in fratres, generis consortia ferro
dissiliant. da, Tartarei regina barathri, 85
quod cupiam uidisse nefas, nec tarda sequetur
mens iuuenum: modo digna ueni, mea pignora nosces.’

taliam dicenti crudelis diua seueros
aduertit uultus. inamoenum forte sedebat
Coccyton iuxta, resolutaque uertice crines 90
lambere sulphureas permiserat anguibus undas.
ilicet igne Iouis lapsisque citatior astris
tristibus exiluit ripis: discedit inane
uulgus et occursum dominae pauet. illa per umbras
et caligantes animarum examine campos 95
Taenariae limen petit inremeabile portae.
sensit adesse Dies, piceo Nox obuia nimbo
lucentes turbauit equos; procul arduus Atlans
horruit et dubia caelum ceruice remisit.
arripit extemplo Maleae de ualle resurgens 100
notum iter ad Thebas; neque enim uelocior ulla
itque reditque uias cognataue Tartara mauult.
centum illi stantes umbrabant ora cerastae,
turba minor diri capitis; sedet intus abactis
ferrea lux oculis, qualis per nubila Phoebes 105
Atracia rubet arte labor; suffusa ueneno
tenditur ac sanie gliscit cutis; igneus atro
ore uapor, quo longa sitis morbique famesque

et populis mors una uenit; riget horrida tergo
palla, et caerulei redeunt in pectora nodi: 110
Atropos hos atque ipsa nouat Proserpina cultus.
tum geminas quatit ira manus: haec igne rogali
fulgurat, haec uiuo manus aera uerberat hydro.

ut stetit, abrupta qua plurimus arce Cithaeron
occurrit caelo, fera sibila crine uirenti 115
congeminat, signum terris, unde omnis Achaei
ora maris late Pelopeaque regna resultant.
audiit et medius caeli Parnasos et asper
Eurotas, dubiamque iugo fragor impulit Oeten
in latus, et geminis uix fluctibus obstitit Isthmos. 120
ipsa suum genetrix curuo delphine uagantem
abripuit frenis gremioque Palaemona pressit.
atque ea Cadmeo praeceps ubi culmine primum
constitit adsuetaque infecit nube penates,
protinus attoniti fratrum sub pectore motus, 125
gentilisque animos subiit furor aegraque laetis
inuidia atque parens odii metus, inde regendi
saeuus amor, ruptaeque uices iurisque secundi
ambitus impatiens, et summo dulcius unum
stare loco, sociisque comes discordia regnis. 130
sic ubi delectos per torua armenta iuuenos
agricola imposito sociare adfectat aratro,
illi indignantes, quis nondum uomere multo
ardua nodosos ceruix descendit in amos,
in diuersa trahunt atque aequis uincula laxant 135
uiribus et uario confundunt limite sulcos:
haud secus indomitos praeceps discordia fratres
asperat. alterni placuit sub legibus anni
exilio mutare ducem. sic iure maligno
fortunam transire iubent, ut sceptrum tenentem 140
foedere praecipiti semper nouus angeret heres.
haec inter fratres pietas erat, haec mora pugnae
sola nec in regem perduratura secundum.
et nondum crasso laquearia fulua metallo,
montibus aut alte Graeis effulta nitebant 145

atria, congestos satis explicitura clientes;
non impacatis regum aduigilantia somnis
pila, nec alterna ferri statione gementes
excubiae, nec cura mero committere gemmas
atque aurum uiolare cibis: sed nuda potestas 150
armauit fratres, pugna est de paupere regno.
dumque uter angustae squalentia iugera Dirces
uerteret aut Tyrii solio non altus ouaret
exulis ambigitur, periit ius fasque bonumque
et uitae mortisque pudor. quo tenditis iras, 155
a, miseri? quid si peteretur crimine tanto
limes uterque poli, quem Sol emissus Eoo
cardine, quem porta uergens prospectat Hibera,
quasque procul terras obliquo sidere tangit
auius aut Borea gelidas madidiue tepentes 160
igne Noti? quid si Phrygiae Tyriaeque sub unum
conuectentur opes? loca dira arcesque nefandae
suffecere odio, furiisque inmanibus emptum
Oedipodae sedisse loco. iam sorte carebat
dilatus Polynicis honos. quis tunc tibi, saeue, 165
quis fuit ille dies, uacua cum solus in aula
respiceres ius omne tuum cunctosque minores,
et nusquam par stare caput! iam murmura serpunt
plebis Echioniae, tacitumque a principe uulgus
dissidet, et, qui mos populis, uenturus amatur. 170
atque aliquis, cui mens humili laesisse ueneno
summa nec impositos umquam ceruice uolenti
ferre duces, ‘hancne Ogygiis,’ ait, ‘aspera rebus
fata tulere uicem, totiens mutare timendos
alternoque iugo dubitantia subdere colla? 175
partiti uersant populorum fata manuque
fortunam fecere leuem. semperne uicissim
exulibus seruire dabor? tibi, summe deorum
terrarumque sator, sociis hanc addere mentem
sedit? an inde uetus Thebis extenditur omen, 180
ex quo Sidonii nequiquam blanda iuueni
pondera Carpathio iussus sale quaerere Cadmus

exul Hyanteos inuenit regna per agros,
fraternasque acies fetae telluris hiatu
augurium seros dimisit ad usque nepotes? 185
cernis ut erectum torua sub fronte minetur
saeuior adsurgens dempto consorte potestas.
quas gerit ore minas, quanto premit omnia fastu!
hicne umquam priuatus erit? tamen ille precanti
mitis et adfatu bonus et patientior aequi. 190
quid mirum? non solus erat. nos uilis in omnes
prompta manus casus, domino cuicumque parati.
qualiter hinc gelidus Boreas, hinc nubifer Eurus
uela trahunt, nutat mediae fortuna carinae,
(heu dubio suspensa metu tolerandaque nullis 195
aspera sors populis!) hic imperat, ille minatur.'

at Iouis imperiis rapidi super atria caeli
lectus concilio diuum conuenerat ordo
interiore polo. spatiis hinc omnia iuxta,
primaque occiduaeque domus et fusa sub omni 200
terra atque unda die. mediis sese arduus infert
ipse deis, placido quatiens tamen omnia uultu,
stellantique locat solio; nec protinus ausi
caelicolae, ueniam donec pater ipse sedendi
tranquilla iubet esse manu. mox turba uagorum 205
semideum et summis cognati nubibus Amnes
et compressa metu seruantes murmura Venti
aurea tecta replent. mixta conuexa deorum
maiestate tremunt, radiant maiore sereno
culmina et arcano florentes lumine postes. 210
postquam iussa quies siluitque exterritus orbis,
incipit ex alto (graue et inmutabile sanctis
pondus adest uerbis, et uocem fata sequuntur):
'terrarum delicta nec exaturabile Diris
ingenium mortale queror. quonam usque nocentum 215
exigar in poenas? taedet saeuire corusco
fulmine, iam pridem Cyclopum operosa fatiscunt
bracchia et Aeoliis desunt incudibus ignes.
atque adeo tuleram falso rectore solutos

Solis equos, caelumque rotis errantibus uri, 220
et Phaethontea mundum squalere fauilla.
nil actum, neque tu ualida quod cuspidē late
ire per illicitum pelago, germane, dedisti.
nunc geminas punire domos, quis sanguinis auctor
ipse ego, descendo. Perseos alter in Argos 225
scinditur, Aonias fluit hic ab origine Thebas.
mens cunctis imposta manet: quis funera Cadmi
nesciat et totiens excitam a sedibus imis
Eumenidum bellasse aciem, mala gaudia matrum
erroresque feros nemorum et reticenda deorum 230
crimina? uix lucis spatium, uix noctis abactae
enumerare queam mores gentemque profanam.
scandere quin etiam thalamos hic impius heres
patris et inmeritae gremium incestare parentis
appetiit, proprios (monstrum!) reuolutus in ortus. 235
ille tamen superis aeterna piacula soluit
proiecitque diem, nec iam amplius aethere nostro
uescitur; at nati (facinus sine more!) cadentes
calcauere oculos. iam iam rata uota tulisti,
dire senex. meruere tuae, meruere tenebrae 240
ultorem sperare Iouem. noua sontibus arma
iniciam regnis, totumque a stirpe reuellam
exitiale genus. belli mihi semina sunt
Adrastus socer et superis adiuncta sinistris
conubia. hanc etiam poenis incessere gentem 245
decretum; neque enim arcano de pectore fallax
Tantalus et saeuae periit iniuria mensae.’

sic pater omnipotens. ast illi saucia dictis
flammato uersans inopinum corde dolorem
taliam Iuno refert: ‘mene, o iustissime diuum, 250
me bello certare iubet? scis, semper ut arces
Cyclopum magnique Phoroneos incluta fama
sceptra uiris opibusque iuuem, licet improbus illic
custodem Phariae somno letoque iuuencae
extinguas, saeptis et turribus aureis intres. 255
mentitis ignosco toris: illam odimus urbem

quam uultu confessus adis, ubi conscia magni
signa tori tonitrus agis et mea fulmina torques.
facta luant Thebae: cur hostes eligis Argos?
quin age, si tanta est thalami discordia sancti, 260
et Samon et ueteres armis excinde Mycenae,
uerte solo Sparten. cur usquam sanguine festo
coniugis ara tuae, cumulo cur turis Eoi
laeta calet? melius uotis Mareotica fumat
Coptos et aerisoni lugentia flumina Nili. 265
quod si prisca luunt auctorum crimina gentes
subuenitque tuis sera haec sententia curis,
percensere aeui senium, quo tempore tandem
terrarum furias abolere et saecula retro
emendare sat est? iamdudum ab sedibus illis 270
incipere, fluctuosa qua praeterlabitur unda
Sicanios longe relegens Alpheos amores:
Arcades hic tua (nec pudor est) delubra nefastis
imposuere locis, illic Mauortius axis
Oenomai Geticoque pecus stabulare sub Haemo 275
dignius, abruptis etiamnum inhumata procorum
reliquiis trunca ora rigent; tamen hic tibi templi
gratus honos; placet Ida nocens mentitaque manes
Creta tuos. me Tantaleis consistere tectis
quae tandem inuidia est? belli deflecte tumultus 280
et generis miserescere tui. sunt impia late
regna tibi, melius generos passura nocentes.'

finierat precibus miscens conuicia Iuno.
at non ille grauis dictis, quamquam aspera motu,
reddidit haec: 'equidem haud rebar te mente secunda 285
laturam, quodcumque tuos, licet aequus, in Argos
consulerem, neque me, detur si copia, fallit
multa super Thebis Bacchum ausuramque Dionen
dicere, sed nostri reuerentia ponderis obstat.
horrendos etenim latices, Stygia aequora fratris, 290
obtestor, mansurum et non reuocabile uerbum,
nil fore quod dictis flectar. quare impiger alis
portantes praecedere Notos, Cyllenia proles,

aera per liquidum regnisque inlapsus opacis
dic patruo: superas senior se attollat ad auras 295
Laius, extinctum nati quem uulnere nondum
ulterior Lethes accepit ripa profundi
lege Erebi; ferat hic diro mea iussa nepoti:
germanum exilio fretum Argolicisque tumentem
hospitiis, quod sponte cupit, procul impius aula 300
arceat, alternum regni infitiatus honorem.
hinc causae irarum, certo reliqua ordine ducam.’

paret Atlantiades dictis genitoris et inde
summa pedum propere plantaribus inligat alis
obnubitque comas et temperat astra galero. 305
tum dextrae uirgam inseruit, qua pellere dulces
aut suadere iterum somnos, qua nigra subire
Tartara et exangues animare adsueuerat umbras.
desiluit, tenuique exceptus inhorruit aura.
nec mora, sublimes raptim per inane uolatus 310
carpit et ingenti designat nubila gyro.

interea patriis olim uagus exul ab oris
Oedipodionides furto deserta pererrat
Aoniae. iam iamque animis male debita regna
concipit, et longum signis cunctantibus annum 315
stare gemit. tenet una dies noctesque recursans
cura uirum, si quando humilem decedere regno
germanum et semet Thebis opibusque potitum
cerneret; hac aeuum cupiat pro luce pacisci.
nunc queritur ceu tarda fugae dispendia, sed mox 320
attollit flatus ducis et sedisse superbus
deiecto iam fratre putat: spes anxia mentem
extrahit et longo consumit gaudia uoto.
tunc sedet Inachias urbes Danaeiaeque arua
et caligantes abrupto sole Mycenae 325
ferre iter impavidum, seu praeuia ducit Erinys,
seu fors illa uiae, siue hac inmota uocabat
Atropos. Ogygiis ululata furoribus antra
deserit et pingues Baccheo sanguine colles.
inde plagam, qua molle sedens in plana Cithaeron 330

porrigitur lassumque inclinat ad aequora montem,
praeterit. hinc arte scopuloso in limite pendens
infames Scirone petras Scyllaeaque rura
purpureo regnata seni mitemque Corinthon
linquit et in mediis audit duo litora campis. 335

iamque per emeriti surgens confinia Phoebi
Titanis late mundo subuecta silenti
rorifera gelidum tenuauerat aera biga;
iam pecudes uolucresque tacent, iam Somnus auaris
inrepsit curis pronusque ex aethere nutat, 340
grata laboratae referens obliuia uitae.
sed nec puniceo rediturum nubila caelo
promisere iubar, nec rarescentibus umbris
longa repercusso nituere crepuscula Phoebō:
densior a terris et nulli peruia flammae 345
subtegitur nox atra polos. iam claustra rigentis
Aeoliae percussa sonant, uenturaque rauco
ore minatur hiems, uenti transversa frementes
confligunt axemque emoto cardine uellunt,
dum caelum sibi quisque rapit; sed plurimus Auster 350
inglomerat noctem, tenebrosa uolumina torquens,
defunditque imbres sicco quos asper hiatu
praesolidat Boreas; nec non abrupta tremescunt
fulgura, et attritus subita face rumpitur aether.
iam Nemea, iam Taenariis contermina lucis 355
Arcadiae capita alta madent; ruit agmine magno
Inachus et gelidas surgens Erasinus in undas.
puluerulenta prius calcandaque flumina nullae
aggeribus tenuere morae, stagnoque refusa est
funditus et ueteri spumauit Lerna ueneno. 360
frangitur omne nemus, rapiunt antiqua procellae
bracchia siluarum, nullisque aspecta per aeuum
solibus umbrosi patuere aestiua Lycaeī.
ille tamen, modo saxa iugis fugientia ruptis
miratus, modo nubigenas e montibus amnes 365
aure pauens passimque insano turbine raptas
pastorum pecorumque domos, non segnius amens

incertusque uiae per nigra silentia uastum
haurit iter; pulsat metus undique et undique frater.
ac uelut hiberno deprensus nauita ponto, 370
cui neque Temo piger neque amico sidere monstrat
Luna uias, medio caeli pelagique tumultu
stat rationis inops, iam iamque aut saxa malignis
expectat summersa uadis aut uertice acuto
spumantes scopulos erectae incurrere prorae: 375
talis opaca legens nemorum Cadmeius heros
accelerat, uasto metuenda umbone ferarum
excutiens stabula, et prono uirgulta refringit
pectore (dat stimulos animo uis maesta timoris)
donec ab Inachiis uicta caligine tectis 380
emicuit lucem deuexa in moenia fundens
Larisaeus apex. illo spe concitus omni
euolat, hinc celsae Iunonia templa Prosymnae
laeuus habens, hinc Herculeo signata uapore
Lernaei stagna atra uadi, tandemque reclusis 385
infertur portis. actutum regia cernit
uestibula; hic artus imbri uentoque rigentes
proicit ignotaeque adclinis postibus aulae
inuitat tenues ad dura cubilia somnos.

rex ibi, tranquillae medio de limite uitae 390
in senium uergens, populos Adrastus habebat,
diues auis et utroque Iouem de sanguine ducens.
hic sexus melioris inops sed prole uirobat
feminea, gemino natarum pignore fultus.
cui Phoebus generos (monstrum exitiabile dictu! 395
mox adaptata fides) fato ducente canebat
saetigerumque suem et fuluum aduentare leonem.
id uoluens non ipse pater, non docte futuri
Amphiarae uides, etenim uetat auctor Apollo.
tantum in corde sedens aegrescit cura parenti. 400

ecce autem antiquam fato Calydona relinquens
Olenius Tydeus (fraterni sanguinis illum
consciis horror agit) eadem, sub nocte sopora,
lustra terit, similesque Notos dequestus et imbres,

infusam tergo glaciem et liquentia nimbis 405
ora comasque gerens subit uno tegmine, cuius
fusus humo gelida partem prior hospes habebat.
hic uero ambobus rabiem fortuna cruentam
attulit: haud passi sociis defendere noctem
culminibus; paulum alternis in uerba minasque 410
cunctantur, mox ut iactis sermonibus irae
intumueri satis, tum uero erectus uterque
exertare umeros nudamque lacessere pugnam.
celsior ille gradu procera in membra simulque
integer annorum; sed non et uiribus infra 415
Tydea fert animus, totosque infusa per artus
maior in exiguo regnabat corpore uirtus.
iam crebros ictus ora et caua tempora circum
obnixi ingeminant, telorum aut grandinis instar
Rhipaeae, flexoque genu uacua ilia tundunt. 420
non aliter quam Pisaeo sua lustra Tonanti
cum redeunt crudisque uirum sudoribus ardet
pulis; at hinc teneros caueae dissensus ephebos
concitata, exclusaeque expectant praemia matres:
sic alacres odio nullaue cupidine laudis 425
accensi incurrunt, scrutatur et intima uultus
unca manus penitusque oculis cedentibus intrat.
forsan et accinctos lateri (sic ira ferebat)
nudassent enses, meliusque hostilibus armis
legendus fratri, iuuenis Thebane, iaceres, 430
ni rex insolitum clamorem et pectore ab alto
stridentes gemitus noctis miratus in umbris,
mouisset gressus, magnis cui sobria curis
pendebat somno iam deteriore senectus.
isque ubi progrediens numerosa luce per alta 435
atria dimotis aduerso limine claustris
terribilem dictu faciem, lacera ora putresque
sanguineo uidet imbre genas: 'quae causa furoris,
externi iuuenes (neque enim meus audeat istas
ciuis in usque manus), quisnam implacabilis ardor 440
exturbare odiis tranquilla silentia noctis?

usque adeone angusta dies, et triste parumper
pacem animo somnumque pati? sed prodite tandem
unde orti, quo fertis iter, quae iurgia? nam uos
haud humiles tanta ira docet, generisque superbi 445
magna per effusum clarescunt signa cruorem.’

uix ea, cum mixto clamore obliqua tuentes
incipiunt una: ‘rex o mitissime Achium,
quid uerbis opus? ipse undantes sanguine uultus
aspicis.’ haec passim turbatis uocis amarae 450
confudere sonis; inde orsus in ordine Tydeus
continuat: ‘maesti cupiens solacia casus
monstriferae Calydonis opes Acheloiaque arua
deserui; uestris haec me ecce in finibus ingens
nox operit. tecto caelum prohibere quis iste 455
arcuit? an quoniam prior haec ad limina forte
molitus gressus? pariter stabulare bimembres
Centaurus unaque ferunt Cyclopes in Aetna
compositos. sunt et rabidis iura insita monstris
fasque suum: nobis sociare cubilia terrae — 460
sed quid ego? aut hodie spoliis gauisus abibis,
quisquis es, his, aut me, si non effetus oborto
sanguis hebet luctu, magni de stirpe creatum
Oeneos et Marti non degenerare paterno
accipies.’ ‘nec nos animi nec stirpis egentes—’ 465
ille refert contra, sed mens sibi conscia fati
cunctatur proferre patrem. tunc mitis Adrastus:
‘immo agite, et positis, quas nox inopinaque suasit
aut uirtus aut ira, minis succedite tecto.
iam pariter coeant animorum in pignora dextrae. 470
non haec incassum diuisque absentibus acta;
forsan et has uenturus amor praemiserit iras,
ut meminisse iuuat.’ nec uana uoce locutus
fata senex, siquidem hanc perhibent post uulnera iunctis
esse fidem, quanta partitum extrema proteruo 475
Thesea Pirithoo, uel inanem mentis Oresten
opposito rabidam Pylade uitasse Megaeram.
tunc quoque mulcentem dictis corda aspera regem

iam faciles (uentis ut decertata residunt
aequora, laxatisque diu tamen aura superstes 480
inmoritur uelis) passi, subiere penates.

hic primum lustrare oculis cultusque uirorum
telaque magna uacat: tergo uidet huius inanem
impexis utrimque iubis horrere leonem,
illius in speciem quem per Teumesia tempe 485
Amphitryoniades fractum iuuenalibus annis
ante Cleonaei uestitus proelia monstri.
terribiles contra saetis ac dente recuruo
Tydea per latos umeros ambire laborant
exuiae, Calydonis honos. stupet omine tanto 490
defixus senior, diuina oracula Phoebi
agnoscens monitusque datos uocalibus antris.
obtutu gelida ora premit, laetusque per artus
horror iit; sensit manifesto numine ductos
adfore, quos nexis ambagibus augur Apollo 495
portendi generos, uultu fallente ferarum,
ediderat. tunc sic tendens ad sidera palmas:
'Nox, quae terrarum caelique amplexa labores
ignei multiuago transmittis sidera lapsu,
indulgens reparare animum dum proximus aegris 500
infundat Titan agiles animantibus ortus,
tu mihi perplexis quaesitam erroribus ultro
aduehis alma fidem ueterisque exordia fati
detegis: adsistas operi tuaque omina firmes.
semper honoratam dimensis orbibus anni 505
te domus ista colet; nigri tibi, diua, litabunt
electa ceruice greges, lustraliaque exta
lacte nouo perfusus edet Volcanius ignis.
salue prisca fides tripodum obscurique recessus.
deprendi, Fortuna, deos.' sic fatus, et ambos 510
innectens manibus tecta interioris ad aulae
progreditur. canis etiamnum altaribus ignes
sopitum cinerem et tepidi libamina sacri
seruabant; adolere focos epulasque recentes
instaurare iubet. dictis parere ministri 515

certatim accelerant; uario strepit icta tumultu
regia: pars ostro tenues auroque sonantes
emunire toros alteque inferre tapetas,
pars teretes leuare manu ac disponere mensas.
ast alii tenebras et opacam uincere noctem 520
adgressi tendunt auratis uincula lychnis.
his labor inserto torrere exanguia ferro
uiscera caesarum pecudum, his cumulare canistris
perdomitam saxo Cererem. laetatur Adrastus
obsequio feruere domum, iamque ipse superbis 525
fulgebat stratis solioque effultus eburno.
parte alia iuuenes siccati uulnera lymphis
discumbunt, simul ora notis foedata tumentur
inque uicem ignoscunt. tunc rex longaeuus Acasten
(natarum haec altrix eadem et fidissima custos 530
lecta sacrum iustae Veneri occultare pudorem)
imperat acciri tacitaque inmurmurat aure.

nec mora praeceptis, cum protinus utraque uirgo
arcano egressae thalamo: mirabile uisu,
Pallados armisonae pharetrataeque ora Dianae 535
aequa ferunt, terrore minus. noua deinde pudori
uisa uirum facies: pariter pallorque ruborque
purpureas hausere genas, oculique uerentes
ad sanctum rediere patrem. postquam ordine mensae
uicta fames, signis perfectam auroque nitentem 540
Iasides pateram famulos ex more poposcit,
qua Danaus libare deis seniorque Phoroneus
adsueti. tenet haec operum caelata figuras:
aureus anguicomam praesecto Gorgona collo
ales habet, iam iamque uagas (ita uisus) in auras 545
exilit; illa graues oculos languentiaque ora
paene mouet uiuoque etiam pallescit in auro.
hinc Phrygius fuluis uenator tollitur alis,
Gargara desidunt surgenti et Troia recedit,
stant maesti comites frustra sonantia lassant 550
ora canes umbramque petunt et nubila latrant.
hanc undante mero fundens uocat ordine cunctos

caelicolas, Phoebum ante alios, Phoebum omnis ad aras
laude ciet comitum famulumque euincta pudica
fronde manus, cui festa dies largoque refecti 555
ture uaporatis lucent altaribus ignes.

‘forsitan, o iuuenes, quae sint ea sacra quibusque
praecipuum causis Phoebi obtestemur honorem,’
rex ait, ‘exquirant animi. non inscia suasit
religio, magnis exercita cladibus olim 560
plebs Argiua litat; animos aduertite, pandam.
postquam caerulei sinuosa uolumina monstri,
terrigenam Pythona, deus, septem orbibus atris
amplexum Delphos squamisque annosa terentem
robor, Castaliis dum fontibus ore trisulco 565
fusus hiat nigro sitiens alimenta ueneno,
perculit, absumptis numerosa in uulnera telis,
Cirrhæique dedit centum per iugera campi
uix tandem explicitum, noua deinde piacula caedis
perquirens nostri tecta haud opulenta Crotopi 570
attigit. huic primis et pubem ineuntibus annis
mira decore pios seruabat nata penates
intemerata toris. felix, si Delia numquam
furta nec occultum Phoebæ sociasset amorem!
namque ut passa deum Nemeæi ad fluminis undam, 575
bis quinos plena cum fronte resumeret orbes
Cynthia, sidereum Latonæ feta nepotem
edidit; ac poenæ metuens (neque enim ille coactis
donasset thalamis ueniam pater) auia rura
eligit ac natum saepta inter ouilia furtim 580
montiuago pecoris custodi mandat alendum.
non tibi digna, puer, generis cunabula tanti
gramineos dedit herba toros et uimine querno
texta domus; clausa arbutei sub cortice libri
membra tepent, suadetque leues caua fistula somnos, 585
et pecori commune solum. sed fata nec illum
concessere larem; uiridi nam caespite terræ
proiectum temere et patulo caelum ore trahentem
dira canum rabies morsu depasta cruento

disicit. hic uero attonitas ut nuntius aures 590
matris adit, pulsus ex animo genitorque pudorque
et metus; ipsa ultro saeuus plangoribus amens
tectis replet, uacuumque ferens uelamine pectus
occurrit confessa patri; nec motus et atro
imperat (infandum!) cupientem occumbere leto. 595
sero memor thalami maestae solacia morti,
Phoebe, paras monstrum infandis Acheronte sub imo
conceptum Eumenidum thalamis, cui uirginis ora
pectoraque; aeternum stridens a uertice surgit
et ferrugineam frontem discriminat anguis. 600
haec tum dira lues nocturno squalida passus
inlabi thalamis, animasque a stirpe recentes
abripere altricum gremiis morsuque cruento
deusci et multum patrio pinguescere luctu.
haud tulit armorum praestans animique Coroebus 605
seque ultro lectis iuuenem, qui robore primi
famam posthabita faciles extendere uita,
obtulit. illa nouos ibat populata penates
portarum in biuiis; lateri duo corpora paruorum
dependent, et iam unca manus uitalibus haeret 610
ferratique ungues tenero sub corde tepescunt:
obuius huic, latus omne uirum stipante corona,
fit iuuenis, ferrumque ingens sub pectore duro
condidit, atque imas animae mucrone corusco
scrutatus latebras tandem sua monstra profunda 615
reddit habere Ioui. iuuat ire et uisere iuxta
liuentes in morte oculos uterique nefandam
proluuiem et crasso squalentia pectora tabo,
qua nostrae cecidere animae. stupet Inacha pubes
magnaque post lacrimas etiamnum gaudia pallent. 620
hi trabibus duris (solacia uana dolori)
proterere exanimos artus asprosque molares
deculcare genis; nequit iram explere potestas.
illam et nocturno circum stridore uolantes
impastae fugistis aues, rabidamque canum uim 625
oraeque sicca ferunt trepidorum inhiasse luporum.

saeuior in miseros fatis ultricis ademptae
Delius insurgit, summaque biuerticis umbra
Parnasi residens arcu crudelis iniquo
pestifera arma iacit, camposque et celsa Cyclopum 630
tectis superiecto nebularum incendit amictu.
labuntur dulces animae, Mors fila Sororum
ense metit captamque tenens fert manibus urbem.
quaerenti quae causa duci, quis ab aethere laeuis
ignis et in totum regnaret Sirius annum, 635
idem auctor Paean rursus iubet ire cruento
inferias monstro iuuenes, qui caede potiti.
fortunate animi longumque in saecula digne
promeriture diem! non tu pia degener arma
occulis aut certae trepidas occurrere morti. 640
comminus ora ferens Cirrhaei in limine templi
constitit et sacras ita uocibus asperat iras:
“non missus, Thymbraee, tuos supplexue penates
aduenio: mea me pietas et conscia uirtus
has egere uias. ego sum qui caede subegi, 645
Phoebe, tuum mortale nefas, quem nubibus atris
et squalente die, nigra quem tabe sinistri
quaeris, inique, poli. quod si monstra effera magnis
cara adeo superis, iacturaque uilior orbi
mors hominum, et saeuo tanta inclementia caelo est, 650
quid meruere Argi? me, me, diuum optime, solum
obiecisse caput fatis praestabat. an illud
lene magis cordi quod desolata domorum
tectis uides, ignique datis cultoribus omnis
lucet ager? sed quid fando tua tela manusque 655
demoror? expectant matres, supremaque fiunt
uota mihi. satis est: merui ne parcere uelles.
proinde moue pharetras arcusque intende sonoros
insignemque animam leto demitte; sed illum,
pallidus Inachiis qui desuper inminet Argis, 660
dum morior, dispelle globum,” sors aequa merentes
respicit. ardentem tenuit reuerentia caedis
Letoiden, tristemque uiro summissus honorem

largitur uitae; nostro mala nubila caelo
diffugiunt, at tu stupefacti a limine Phoebi 665
exoratus abis. inde haec stata sacra quotannis
sollemnes recolunt epulae, Phoebeaque placat
templa nouatus honos. has forte inuisitis aras
uos quae progenies? quamquam Calydonius Oeneus
et Porthaoniae, si dudum certus ad aures 670
clamor iit, tibi iura domus. tu pande quis Argos
aduenias, quando haec uariis sermonibus hora est.’

deiecit maestos extemplo Ismenius heros
in terram uultus, taciteque ad Tydea laeuum
obliquare oculos; tum longa silentia mouit: 675
‘non super hos diuum tibi sum quaerendus honores,
unde genus, quae terra mihi, quis defluat ordo
sanguinis antiqui: piget inter sacra fateri.
sed si praecipitant miserum cognoscere curae,
Cadmus origo patrum, tellus Mauortia Thebe, 680
est genetrix Iocasta mihi.’ tum motus Adrastus
hospitiis (agnouit enim): ‘quid nota recondis?
scimus’ ait ‘nec sic auersum fama Mycenis
uoluit iter. regnum et furias oculosque pudentes
nouit et Arctois si quis de solibus horret 685
quique bibit Gangem aut nigrum occasibus intrat
Oceanum et si quos incerto litore Syrtes
destituunt. ne perge queri casusque priorum
adnumerare tibi: nostro quoque sanguine multum
errauit pietas, nec culpa nepotibus obstat. 690
tu modo dissimilis rebus mereare secundis
excusare tuos. sed iam temone supino
languet Hyperboreae glacialis portitor Vrsae.
fundite uina focus, seruatoremque parentum
Letoiden uotis iterumque iterumque canamus. 695

Phoebe parens, seu te Lyciae Pataraea niuosis
exercent dumeta iugis, seu rore pudico
Castaliae flauos amor est tibi mergere crines,
seu Troiam Thymbraeus habes, ubi fama uolentem
ingratis Phrygios umeris subiisse molares, 700

seu iuuat Aegaeum feriens Latonius umbra
Cynthus et adsiduam pelago non quaerere Delon:
tela tibi longeque feros lentandus in hostes
arcus et aetherii dono cessere parentis
aeternum florere genas; tu doctus iniquas 705
Parcarum praenosse manus fatumque quod ultra est
et summo placitura Ioui, quis letifer annus,
bella quibus populis, quae mutant sceptrata cometae;
tu Phryga summittis citharae, tu matris honori
terrigenam Tityon Stygiis extendis harenis; 710
te uiridis Python Thebanaque mater ouantem
horruit in pharetris, ultrix tibi torua Megaera
ieiunum Phlegyan subter caua saxa iacentem
aeterno premit accubitu dapibusque profanis
instimulat, sed mixta famem fastidia uincunt: 715
adsis o memor hospitii, Iunoniaque arua
dexter ames, seu te roseum Titana uocari
gentis Achaemeniae ritu, seu praestat Osirim
frugiferum, seu Persei sub rupibus antri
indignata sequi torquentem cornua Mithram.'

Liber Secundus

Interea gelidis Maia satus aliger umbris
iussa gerens magni remeat Iouis; undique pigrae
ire uetant nubes et turbidus implicat aer,
nec Zephyri rapuere gradum, sed foeda silentis
aura poli. Styx inde nouem circumflua campis, 5
hinc obiecta uias torrentum incendia claudunt.
pone senex trepida succedit Laius umbra
uulnere tardus adhuc; capulo nam largius illi
transabiit animam cognatis ictibus ensis
impius et primas Furiarum pertulit iras; 10
it tamen et medica firmat uestigia uirga.
tum steriles luci possessaque manibus arua
et ferrugineum nemus astupet, ipsaque Tellus
miratur patuisse retro, nec liuida tabes
inuidiae functis quamquam et iam lumine cassis 15
defuit. unus ibi ante alios, cui laeua uoluntas
semper et ad superos (hinc et grauis exitus aeu)
insultare malis rebusque aegrescere laetis,
'uade' ait 'o felix, quoscumque uocaris in usus,
seu Iouis imperio, seu maior adegit Erinys 20
ire diem contra, seu te furiata sacerdos
Thessalis arcano iubet emigrare sepulcro,
heu dulces uisure polos solemque relictum
et uirides terras et puros fontibus amnes,
tristior has iterum tamen intrature tenebras.' 25
illos ut caeco recubans in limine sensit
Cerberus, atque omnes capitum subrexit hiatus;
saeuus et intranti populo, iam nigra tumebat
colla minax, iam sparsa solo turbauerat ossa,
ni deus horrentem Lethaeo uimine mulcens 30
ferrea tergemino domuisset lumina somno.
est locus (Inachiae dixerunt Taenara gentes)
qua formidatum Maleae spumantis in auras
it caput et nullos admittit culmine uisus.

stat sublimis apex uentosque imbresque serenus 35
despicit et tantum fessis insiditur astris.

[illic exhausti posuere cubilia uenti,
fulminibusque iter est; medium caua nubila montis
insumpsere latus, summos nec praepetis alae
plausus adit colles, nec rauca tonitrua pulsant.] 40
ast ubi prona dies, longos super aequora fines
exigit atque ingens medio natat umbra profundo.
interiore sinu frangentia litora curuat

Taenaros, expositos non audax scandere fluctus.

illic Aegaeo Neptunus gurgite fessos 45

in portum deducit equos, prior haurit harenas
ungula, postremi soluuntur in aequora pisces.

hoc, ut fama, loco pallentes deuius umbras
trames agit nigrique Iouis uacua atria ditat
mortibus. Arcadii perhibent si uera coloni, 50
stridor ibi et gemitus poenarum, atroque tumultu
feruet ager; saepe Eumenidum uocesque manusque
in medium sonuere diem, Letique triformis
ianitor agricolas campis auditus abegit.

hac et tunc fusca uolucer deus obsitus umbra 55
exilit ad superos, infernaque nubila uultu
discutit et uiuis adflatibus ora serenat.

inde per Arcturum mediaeque silentia Lunae
arua super populosque meat. Sopor obuius illi
Noctis agebat equos, trepidusque adsurgit honori 60
numinis et recto decedit limite caeli.

inferior uolat umbra deo, praereptaque noscit
sidera principiumque sui; iamque ardua Cirrhae
pollutamque suo despectat Phocida busto.

uentum erat ad Thebas; gemit prope limina nati 65
Laius et notos cunctatus inire penates.

ut uero et celsis suamet iuga nixa columnis
uidit et infectos etiamnum sanguine currus,
paene retro turbatus abit: nec summa Tonantis
iussa nec Arcadiae retinent spiramina uirgae. 70

et tunc forte dies noto signata Tonantis

fulmine, praerepti cum te, tener Euhie, partus
transmisere patri. Tyriis ea causa colonis
insomnem ludo certatim educere noctem
suaserat; effusi passim per tecta, per agros, 75
serta inter uacuosque mero crateras anhelum
proflabant sub luce deum; tunc plurima buxus
aeraque taurinos sonitu uincentia pulsus;
ipse etiam gaudens nemorosa per auia sanas
impulerat matres Baccho meliore Cithaeron: 80
qualia per Rhodopen rabido conuiuia coetu
Bistones aut mediae ponunt conuallibus Ossae;
illis semianimum pecus excussaeque leonum
ore dapes et lacte nouo domuisse cruorem
luxus; at Ogygii si quando adflauit Iacchi 85
saeuus odor, tunc saxa manu, tunc pocula pulchrum
spargere et inmerito sociorum sanguine fuso
instaurare diem festasque reponere mensas.

nox ea cum tacita uolucer Cyllenius aura
regis Echionii stratis adlapsus, ubi ingens 90
fuderat Assyriis extructa tapetibus alto
membra toro. pro gnara nihil mortalia fati
corda sui! capit ille dapes, habet ille soporem.
tunc senior quae iussus agit; neu falsa uideri
noctis imago queat, longaeui uatis opacos 95
Tiresiae uultus uocemque et uellera nota
induitur. mansere comae propexaque mento
canities pallorque suus, sed falsa cucurrit
infula per crines, glaucaeque innexus oliuae
uittarum prouenit honos; dehinc tangere ramo 100
pectora et has uisus fatorum expromere uoces:
'non somni tibi tempus, iners qui nocte sub alta
germani secure iaces, ingentia dudum
acta uocant rerumque graues, ignaue, paratus.
tu, ueluti magnum si iam tollentibus Austris 105
Ionium nigra iaceat sub nube magister
inmemor armorum uersantisque aequora clauī,
cunctaris. iamque ille nouis (scit Fama) superbit

conubiis uiresque parat, quis regna capessat,
quis neget, inque tua senium sibi destinat aula. 110
dant animos socer augurio fatalis Adrastus
dotalessque Argi, nec non in foedera uitae
pollutus placuit fraterno sanguine Tydeus.
hinc tumor, et longus fratri promitteris exul.
ipse deum genitor tibi me miseratus ab alto 115
mittit: habe Thebas, caecumque cupidine regni,
ausurumque eadem, germanum expelle, nec ultra
fraternos inhiantem obitus sine fidere coeptis
fraudibus aut Cadmo dominas inferre Mycenae.'

dixit, et abscedens (etenim iam pallida turbant 120
sidera lucis equi) ramos ac uellera fronti
deripuit, confessus auum, dirique nepotis
incubuit stratis; iugulum mox caede patentem
nudat et undanti perfundit uulnere somnum.
illi rupta quies, attollit membra toroque 125
erigitur plenus monstris, uanumque cruorem
excutiens simul horret auum fratremque requirit.
qualis ubi audito uenantum murmure tigris
horruit in maculas somnosque excussit inertes,
bella cupit laxatque genas et temperat ungues, 130
mox ruit in turmas natisque alimenta cruentis
spirantem fert ore uirum: sic excitus ira
ductor in absentem consumit proelia fratrem.

et iam Mygdoniis elata cubilibus alto
impulerat caelo gelidas Aurora tenebras, 135
rorantes excussa comas multumque sequenti
sole rubens; illi roseus per nubila seras
aduertit flammam alienumque aethera tardo
Lucifer exit equo, donec pater igneus orbem
impleat atque ipsi radios uetet esse sorori, 140
cum senior Talaionides nec longa morati
Dircaeusque gradum pariterque Acheloius heros
corripuere toris. illos post uerbera fessos
exceptamque hiemem cornu perfuderat omni
Somnus; at Inachio tenuis sub pectore regi 145

tracta quies, dum mente deos inceptaque uersat
hospitia, et quae sint generis ascita repertis
fata mouet. postquam mediis in sedibus aulae
congressi inque uicem dextras iungere locumque,
quo serere arcanas aptum atque euoluere curas, 150
insidunt, prior his dubios compellat Adrastus:
‘egregii iuuenum, quos non sine numine regnis
inuexit nox atra meis, quibus ipse per imbres
fulminibus mixtos intempestumque Tonantem
has meus usque domos uestigia fecit Apollo, 155
non equidem obscurum uobis plebique Pelasgae
esse rear, quantis conubia nostra procorum
turba petant studiis; geminae mihi namque, nepotum
laeta fides, aequo pubescunt sidere natae.
quantus honos, quantusque pudor (ne credite patri) 160
et super hesternas licuit cognoscere mensas.
has tumidi solio et late dominantibus armis
optauere uiri (longum enumerare Pharaeos
Oebaliosque duces) et Achaea per oppida matres
spem generis, nec plura tuus despexerat Oeneus 165
foedera Pisaeisque socer metuendus habenis.
sed mihi nec Sparta genitos nec ab Elide missos
iungere fas generos: uobis hic sanguis et aulae
cura meae longo promittitur ordine fati.
di bene, quod tales stirpemque animosque uenitis 170
ut responsa iuuent: hic durae tempore noctis
partus honos, haec illa uenit post uerbera merces.’

audierant, fixosque oculos per mutua paulum
ora tenent, uisque inter sese ordine fandi
cedere. sed cunctis Tydeus audentior actis 175
incipit: ‘o quam te parcum in praeconia famae
mens agitat matura tuae, quantumque ferentem
fortunam uirtute domas! cui cedat Adrastus
imperiis? quis te solio Sicyonis auitae
excitum infrenos componere legibus Argos 180
nesciat? atque utinam his manibus permittere gentes,
Iuppiter aequae, uelis, quas Doricus adligat undis

Isthmos et alterno quas margine summouet infra.
non fugeret diras lux intercisa Mycenae,
saeua nec Eleae gement certamina ualles, 185
~Eumenidesque aliis aliae sub regibus,~ et quae
tu potior, Thebane, queri: nos uero uolentes
expositique animis.' sic interfatus, et alter
subicit: 'anne aliquis soceros accedere tales
abnuat? exulibus quamquam patriaue fugatis 190
nondum laeta Venus, tamen omnis corde resedit
tristitia, adfixique animo cessere dolores.
nec minus haec laeti trahimus solacia, quam si
praecipiti conuulsa Noto prospectet amicam
puppis humum. iuuat ingressos felicia regni 195
omina quod superest fati uitaeque laborum
fortuna transire tua.' nec plura morati
consurgunt, dictis impensius aggerat omne
promissum Inachus pater, auxilioque futurum
et patriis spondet reduces inducere regnis. 200
ergo alacres Argi, fuso rumore per urbem
aduenisse duci generos primisque hymenaeis
egregiam Argian nec formae laude secundam
Deipylon tumida iam uirginitate iugari,
gaudia mente parant. socias it Fama per urbes 205
finitimisque agitatur agris procul usque Lycaeos
Partheniosque super saltus Ephyraeaeque rura,
nec minus Ogygiae eadem dea turbida Thebas
insilit: haec totis perfundit moenia pennis
Labdaciumque ducem praemissae consona nocti 210
territat; hospitia et thalamos et foedera regni
permixtumque genus (quae tanta licentia monstro,
quis furor?) et iam bella canit.

diffuderat Argos
expectata dies: laeto regalia coetu
atria complentur, species est cernere auorum 215
comminus et uiuis certantia uultibus aera.
tantum ausae perferre manus! pater ipse bicornis
in laeuum prona nixus sedet Inachus urna;

hunc tegit Iasiusque senex placidusque Phoroneus
et bellator Abas indignatusque Tonantem 220

Acrisius nodoque ferens caput ense Coroebus
toruaque iam Danaï facinus meditantis imago;
exin mille duces. foribus cum inmissa superbis
unda fremit uulgi, procerum manus omnis et alto
quis propior de rege gradus stant ordine primi. 225
interior sacris calet et sonat aula tumultu

femineo; casta matrem cinxere corona
Argolides, pars uirginibus circum undique fusae
foedera conciliant noua solanturque timorem.
ibant insignes uultuque habituque uerendo 230

candida purpureum fusae super ora pudorem
deiectaeque genas; tacite subit ille supremus
uirginitatis amor, primaeque modestia culpa
confundit uultus; tunc ora rigantur honestis
imbribus, et teneros lacrimae iuuere parentes. 235

non secus ac supero pariter si cardine lapsae
Pallas et asperior Phoebi soror, utraque telis,
utraque torua genis flauoque in uertice nodo,
illa suas Cyntho comites agat, haec Aracyntho;
tunc, si fas oculis, non umquam longa tuendo 240
expedias, cui maior honos, cui gratior, aut plus
de Ioue; mutatosque uelint transumere cultus,
et Pallas deceat pharetras et Delia cristas.

certant laetitia superosque in uota fatigant
Inachidae, quae cuique domus sacrique facultas. 245
hi fibris animaque, hi caespite nudo,
nec minus auditi, si mens accepta, merentur
ture deos, fractisque obtendunt limina siluis.
ecce metu subito (Lachesis sic dura iubebat)
impulsae mentes, excussaue gaudia patri, 250
et turbata dies. innuptam limine adibant
Pallada, Monychiis cui non Argiua per urbes
posthabita est Larisa iugis; hic more parentum
Iasides, thalamis ubi casta adolesceret aetas,
uirgineas libare comas primosque solebant 255

excussare toros. celsam subeuntibus arcem
in gradibus summi delapsus culmine templi,
Arcados Euhippi spolium, cadit aereus orbis,
praemissasque faces, festum nubentibus ignem,
obruit, eque adytis simul exaudita remotis 260
nondum ausos firmare gradum tuba terruit ingens.
in regem conuersi omnes formidine prima,
mox audisse negant; cunctos tamen omina rerum
dira mouent, uariisque metum sermonibus augent.
nec mirum: nam tu infaustos donante marito 265
ornatus, Argia, geris dirumque monile
Harmoniae. longa est series, sed nota malorum
persequar, unde nouis tam saeua potentia donis.

Lemnius haec, ut prisca fides, Mauortia longum
furta dolens, capto postquam nil obstat amori 270
poena nec ultrices castigauere catenae,
Harmoniae dotale decus sub luce iugali
struxerat. hoc, docti quamquam maiora, laborant
Cyclopes, notique operum Telchines amica
certatim iuuere manu; sed plurimus ipsi 275
sudor. ibi arcano florentes igne zmaragdus
cingit et infaustas percussus adamanta figuras
Gorgoneosque orbes Sriculaque incude relictos
fulminis extremi cineres uiridumque draconum
lucentes a fronte iubas; hic flebile germen 280
Hesperidum et dirum Phrixei uelleris aurum;
tum uarias pestes raptumque interplicat atro
Tisiphones de crine ducem, et quae pessima ceston
uis probat; haec circum spumis lunaribus unguis
callidus atque hilari perfundit cuncta ueneno. 285
non hoc Pasithea blandarum prima sororum,
non Decor Idaliusque puer, sed Luctus et Irae
et Dolor et tota pressit Discordia dextra.
prima fides operi, Cadmum comitata iacentem
Harmonia uersis in sibila dira querelis 290
Illyricos longo sulcauit pectore campos.
improba mox Semele uix dona nocentia collo

induit, et fallax intrauit limina Iuno.
teque etiam, infelix, perhibent, Iocasta, decorum
possedissee nefas; uultus hac laude colebas, 295
heu quibus, heu, placitura toris! post longior ordo.
tunc donis Argia nitet uilesque sororis
ornatus sacro praeculta superuenit auro.
uiderat hoc coniunx perituri uatis, et aras
ante omnes epulasque trucem secreta coquebat 300
inuidiam, saeuis detur si quando potiri
cultibus, heu nihil auguriis adiuta propinquis.
quos optat gemitus, quantas cupit impia clades!
digna quidem: sed quid miseri decepta mariti
arma, quid insontes nati meruere furores? 305
postquam regales epulas et gaudia uulgi
bisseni clausere dies, Ismenius heros
respicere ad Thebas iamque et sua quaerere regna.
quippe animum subit illa dies, qua, sorte benigna
fratris, Echionia steterat priuatus in aula, 310
respiens descisse deos trepidoque tumultu
dilapsos comites++nudum latus omne fugamque
fortunae. namque una soror producere tristes
exulis ausa uias; etiam hanc in limine primo
liquerat et magna lacrimas incluserat ira. 315
tunc quos excedens hilares (quis cultus iniqui
praecipuus ducis) et profugo quos ipse notarat
ingemuisse sibi per noctem ac luce sub omni
digerit; exedere animum dolor iraque demens
et, qua non grauior mortalibus addita curis, 320
spes, ubi longa uenit. talem sub pectore nubem
consilii uoluens Dircen Cadmique negatas
apparat ire domos. ueluti dux taurus amata
ualle carens, pulsum solito quem gramine uictor
iussit ab erepta longe mugire iuuenca, 325
cum profugo placuere tori ceruixque recepto
sanguine magna redit fractaeque in pectora quercus,
bella cupit pastusque et capta armenta reposcit
iam pede, iam cornu melior (pauet ipse reuersum

uictor, et attoniti uix agnouere magistri): 330
 non alias tacita iuuenis Teumesius iras
 mente acuit. sed fida uias arcanaque coniunx
 senserat; utque toris primo complexa iacebat
 aurorae pallore uirum, ‘quos, callide, motus
 quamue fugam moliris?’ ait ‘nil transit amantes. 335
 sentio, peruigiles acuunt suspiria questus,
 numquam in pace sopor. quotiens haec ora natare
 fletibus et magnas latrantia pectora curas
 admota deprendo manu! nil foedere rupto
 conubiisue super moueor uiduaque iuuenta, 340
 etsi crudus amor necdum post flammea toti
 intepuere tori: tua me, properabo fateri,
 angit, amate, salus. tune incommitatus, inermis
 regna petes? poterisque tuis decedere Thebis,
 si neget? atque illum sollers deprendere semper 345
 Fama duces tumidum narrat raptoque superbum
 difficilemque tibi: necdum consumpserat annum.
 me quoque nunc uates, nunc exta minantia diuos
 aut auium lapsus aut turbida noctis imago
 terret et (a, memini!) numquam mihi falsa per umbras 350
 Iuno uenit. quo tendis iter? ni conscius ardor
 ducit et ad Thebas melior socer.’ hic breue tandem
 risit Echionius iuuenis tenerumque dolorem
 coniugis amplexu solatus et oscula maestis
 tempestiua genis posuit lacrimasque repressit: 355
 ‘solue metus animo, dabitur, mihi crede, merentum
 consiliis tranquilla dies; te fortior annis
 nondum cura decet. sciat haec Saturnius olim
 fata parens, oculosque polo demittere si quos
 Iustitia et rectum terris defendere curat. 360
 fors aderit lux illa tibi, qua moenia cernes
 coniugis et geminas ibis regina per urbes.’
 sic ait, et caro raptim se limine profert.
 Tydea iam socium coeptis, iam pectore fido
 aequantem curas (tantus post iurgia mentes 365
 uinxit amor) socerumque adfatur tristis Adrastum.

fit mora consilio, cum multa mouentibus una
iam potior cunctis sedit sententia, fratris
pertemptare fidem tutosque in regna precando
explorare aditus. audax ea munera Tydeus 370
sponte subit; nec non et te, fortissime gentis
Aetolum, multum lacrimis conata morari
Deipyle, sed iussa patris tutique regressus
legato iustaeque preces uicere sororis.

iamque emensus iter siluis ac litore durum, 375
qua Lernaean palus, ambustaque sontibus alte
intepet hydra uadis, et qua uix carmine raro
longa sonat Nemea nondum pastoribus ausis,
qua latus Eoos Ephyres quod uergit ad Euros
Sisyphiique sedent portus irataque terrae 380
curua Palaemonio secluditur unda Lechaeo.
hinc praeteruectus Nisum et te, mitis Eleusin,
laeuus abit, iamque arue gradu Teumesia et arces
intrat Agenoreas; ibi durum Eteoclea cernit
sublimem solio saeptumque horrentibus armis. 385
iura ferus populo trans legem ac tempora regni
iam fratris de parte dabat; sedet omne paratus
in facinus queriturque fidem tam sero reposci.

constitit in mediis (ramus manifestat oliuae
legatum) causasque uiae nomenque rogatus 390
edidit; utque rudis fandi pronusque calori
semper erat, iustis miscens tamen aspera coepit:
'si tibi plana fides et dicti cura maneret
foederis, ad fratrem completo iustius anno
legatos hinc ire fuit teque ordine certo 395
fortunam exuere et laetum descendere regno,
ut uagus ille diu passusque haud digna per urbes
ignotas pactae tandem succederet aulae.
sed quia dulcis amor regni blandumque potestas,
posceris: astriferum iam uelox circulus orbem 400
torsit et amissae redierunt montibus umbrae,
ex quo frater inops ignota per oppida tristes
exul agit casus; et te iam tempus aperto

sub Ioue ferre dies terrenaque frigora membris
ducere et externos summissum ambire penates. 405
pone modum laetis; satis ostro diues et auro
conspicuus tenuem germani pauperis annum
risisti; moneo, regnorum gaudia temet
dedoceas patiensque fugae mereare reuerti.’

dixerat. ast illi tacito sub pectore dudum 410
igne corda fremunt, iacto uelut aspera saxo
comminus erigitur serpens, cui subter inanes
longa sitis latebras totumque agitata per artus
conuocat in fauces et squamea colla uenenum:
‘cognita si dubiis fratris mihi iurgia signis 415
ante forent nec clara odiorum arcana paterent,
sufficeret uel sola fides, qua toruus et illum
mente gerens (ceu saepta nouus iam moenia laxet
fossor et hostiles inimicent classica turmas)
praeferis. in medios si comminus orsa tulisses 420
Bistonas aut refugo pallentes sole Gelonos,
parcior eloquio et medii reuerentior aequi
inciperes. neque te furibundae crimine mentis
arguerim: mandata refers. nunc omnia quando
plena minis, nec sceptrum fide nec pace sequestra 425
poscitis, et propior capulo manus, haec mea regi
Argolico, nondum aequa tuis, uice dicta reporta:
quae sors iusta mihi, quae non indebitus annis
sceptrum dicauit honos, teneo longumque tenebo:
te penes Inachiae dotalis regia dono 430
coniugis, et Danaae (quid enim maioribus actis
inuideam?) cumulentur opes. felicibus Argos
auspiciis Lernamque regas: nos horrida Dirces
pascua et Euboicis artatas fluctibus oras,
non indignati miserum dixisse parentem 435
Oedipoden: tibi larga (Pelops et Tantalus auctor!)
nobilitas, propiorque fluat de sanguine iuncto
Iuppiter. anne feret luxu consueta paterno
hunc regina larem? nostrae cui iure sorores
anxia pensa trahant, longo quam sordida luctu 440

mater et ex imis auditus forte tenebris
offendat sacer ille senex. iam pectora uulgi
adsueuere iugo: pudet heu plebisque patrumque:
ne totiens incerta ferant mutentque gementes
imperia et dubio pigeat parere tyranno. 445
non parcit populis regnum breue; respice quantus
horror et attoniti nostro in discrimine ciues.
hosne ego, quis certa est sub te duce poena, relinquam?
iratus, germane, uenis. fac uelle: nec ipsi,
si modo notus amor meritique est gratia, patres 450
reddere regna sinent.' non ultra passus et orsa
iniecit mediis sermonibus obuia: 'reddes,'
ingeminat 'reddes; non si te ferreus agger
ambiat aut triplices alio tibi carmine muros
Amphion auditus agat, nil tela nec ignes 455
obstiterint, quin ausa luas nostrisque sub armis
captiuo moribundus humum diademate pulses.
tu merito; ast horum miseret, quos sanguine uiles
coniugibus natisque infanda ad proelia raptos
proicis excidio, bone rex. o quanta Cithaeron 460
funera sanguineusque uadis, Ismene, rotabis!
haec pietas, haec magna fides! nec crimina gentis
mira equidem duco: sic primus sanguinis auctor
incestique patrum thalami; sed fallit origo:
Oedipodis tu solus eras, haec praemia morum 465
ac sceleris, uiolente, feres! nos poscimus annum!
sed moror.' haec audax etiamnum in limine retro
uociferans, iam tunc impulsa per agmina praeceps,
euolat. Oeneae uindex sic ille Dianae
erectus saetis et aduncae fulmine malae, 470
cum premeret Pelopea phalanx, saxa obuia uoluens
fractaque perfossis arbusta Acheloia ripis,
iam Telamona solo, iam stratum Ixiona linquens
te, Meleagre, subit: ibi demum cuspide lata
haesit et obnixo ferrum laxauit in armo. 475
talis adhuc trepidum linquit Calydonius heros
concilium infrendens, ipsi ceu regna negentur,

festinatque uias ramumque precantis oliuae
abicit. attonitae tectorum e limine summo
aspectant matres, saeueque infanda precantur 480
Oenidae tacitoque simul sub pectore regi.

nec piger ingenio scelerum fraudisque nefandae
rector eget. iuuenum fidos, lectissima bello
corpora, nunc pretio, nunc ille hortantibus ardens
sollicitat dictis, nocturnaue proelia saeuus 485
instruit, et (sanctum populis per saecula nomen)
legatum insidiis tacitoque inuadere ferro
(quid regnis non uile?) cupit. quas quaereret artes
si fratrem, Fortuna, dares? o caeca nocentum
consilia! o semper timidum scelus! exit in unum 490
plebs ferro iurata caput: ceu castra subire
apparet aut celsum crebris impulsibus urbis
inclinare latus, densi sic agmine facto
quingenta altis funduntur in ordine portis.
macte animi, tantis dignus qui crederis armis! 495

fert uia per dumos propior, qua calle latenti
praecelerant densaeque legunt compendia siluae.
lecta dolis sedes: gemini procul urbe malignis
faucibus urguntur colles, quos umbra superni
montis et incuruis claudunt iuga frondea siluis 500
(insidias natura loco caecamque latendi
struxit opem), mediasque arte secat aspera rupes
semita, quam subter campi deuexaque latis
arua iacent spatiis. contra importuna crepido,
Oedipodioniae domus alitis; hic fera quondam 505
pallentes erecta genas suffusaue tabo
lumina, concretis infando sanguine plumis
reliquias amplexa uirum semesaue nudis
pectoribus stetit ossa premens uisuque trementi
conlustrat campos, si quis concurrere dictis 510
hospes inexplicitis aut comminus ire uiator
audeat et dirae commercia iungere linguae;
nec mora, quin acuens exertos protinus ungues
liuentesque manus fractosque in uulnere dentes

terribili applausu circum hospita surgeret ora; 515
et latuere doli, donec de rupe cruenta
(heu simili deprensa uiro!) cessantibus alis
tristis inexpectam scopulis adfligeret aluum.
monstrat silua nefas: horrent uicina iuuenti
gramina, damnatis auidum pecus abstinet herbis. 520
non Dryadum placet umbra choris non commoda sacris
Faunorum, diraeque etiam fugere uolucres
prodigiale nemus. tacitis huc gressibus acti
deueniunt peritura cohors, hostemque superbum
adnixa iaculis et humi posita arma tenentes 525
expectant, densaque nemus statione coronant.

coeperat umentis Phoebum subtexere palla
Nox et caeruleam terris infuderat umbram.
ille propinquabat siluis et ab aggere celso
scuta uirum galeasque uidet rutilare comantes, 530
qua laxant rami nemus aduersaque sub umbra
flammeus aeratis lunae tremor errat in armis.
obstupuit uisis, ibat tamen, horrida tantum
spicula et inclusum capulo tenuis admouet ensem,
ac prior 'unde, uiri, quidue occultatis in armis?' 535
non humili terrore rogat. nec reddita contra
uox, fidamque negant suspecta silentia pacem.
ecce autem uasto Cthonii contorta lacerto,
quo duce freta cohors, fuscas interuolat auras
hasta; sed audenti deus et fortuna recessit. 540
per tamen Olenii tegimen suis atraque saetis
terga super laeuos umeros uicina cruori
effugit et uiduo iugulum ferit inrita ligno.
tunc horrere comae sanguisque in corda gelari.
huc ferus atque illuc animum pallentiaque ira 545
ora ferens (nec tanta putat sibi bella parari):
'ferre gradum contra campoque erumpite aperto!
quis timor audendi, quae tanta ignauia? solus,
solus in arma uoco.' neque in his mora; quos ubi plures,
quam ratus, innumeris uidet excursare latebris, 550
hos deire iugis, illos e uallibus imis

crescere, nec paucos campo, totumque sub armis
conlucere iter (ut clausas indagine profert
in medium uox prima feras), quae sola medendi
turbata ratione uia est, petit ardua dirae 555
Sphingos et abscisis infringens cautibus uncas
exuperat iuga dura manus, scopuloque potitus,
unde procul tergo metus et uia prona nocendi,
saxum ingens, quod uix plena ceruice gementes
uertere humo et muris ualeant inferre iuuenti, 560
rupibus auellit; dein toto sanguine nixus
sustinet, inmanem quaerens librare ruinam,
qualis in aduersos Lapithas erexit inanem
magnanimus cratera Pholus. stupet obuia leto
turba superstantem atque emissi turbine montis 565
obruitur; simul ora uirum, simul arma manusque
fractaque commixto sederunt pectora ferro.
quattuor hic adeo disiecti mole sub una
congemuere, fuga tremefactum protinus agmen
excutitur coeptis. neque enim temnenda iacebant 570
funera: fulmineus Dorylas, quem regibus ardens
aequabat uirtus, Martisque e semine Theron
terrigenas confisus auos, nec uertere cuiquam
frena secundus Halys, sed tunc pedes occubat aruis,
Pentheumque trahens nondum te Phaedimus aequo, 575
Bacche, genus. quorum ut subitis exterrita fati
agmina turbatam uidit laxare cateruam,
quae duo sola manu gestans adclinia monti
fixerat, intorquet iacula et fugientibus addit.
mox in plana libens, nodo ne pectore tela 580
inciderent, saltu praeceps defertur et orbem,
quem procul oppresso uidit Therone uolutum,
corripuit, tergoque et uertice tegmina nota
saeptus et hostili propugnans pectora parma
constitit. inde iterum densi glomerantur in unum 585
Ogygiae firmantque gradum; trahit ocius ense
Bistonium Tydeus, Mauortia munera magni
Oeneos, et partes pariter diuisus in omnes

hos obit atque illos ferroque micantia tela
decutit; impeditant numero seque ipsa uicissim 590
arma premunt, nec uis conatibus ulla, sed ipsae
in socios errare manus et corpora turba
inuolui prolapsa sua; manet ille ruentes
angustus telis et inexpugnabilis obstat.
non aliter Getica (si fas est credere) Phlegra 595
armatum immensus Briareus stetit aethera contra,
hinc Phoebi pharetras, hinc toruae Pallados angues,
inde Pelethroniam praefixa cuspide pinum
Martis, at hinc lasso mutata Pyracmoni temnens
fulmina, cum toto nequiquam obsessus Olympo 600
tot queritur cessare manus: non segnior ardet
huc illuc clipeum obiectans, seque ipse recedens
circumit; interdum trepidis occurrit et instat
spicula deuellens, clipeo quae plurima toto
fixa tremunt armantque uirum; saepe aspera passus 605
uulnera, sed nullum uitae in secreta receptum
nec mortem sperare ualet. rotat ipse furem
Deilochum, comitemque illi iubet ire sub umbras
Phegea sublata minitantem bella securi
Dircaumque Gyan et Echionium Lycophonten. 610
iam trepidi sese quaerunt numerantque, nec idem
caedis amor, tantamque dolent rarescere turbam.

ecce Chromis Tyrii demissus origine Cadmi
(hunc utero quondam Dryope Phoenissa grauato
rapta repente choris onerisque oblita ferebat, 615
dumque trahit prensis taurum tibi cornibus, Euhan,
procidit impulsus nimiis conatibus infans)
tunc audax iaculis et capti pelle leonis
pineae nodosae quassabat robora clauae
increpitans: 'unusne, uiri, tot caedibus, unus 620
ibit ouans Argos? uix credet fama reuerso!
heu socii, nullaene manus, nulla arma ualebunt?
haec regi promissa, Cydon, haec, Lampe, dabamus?'
dum clamat, subit ore cauo Teumesia cornus,
nec prohibent fauces; atque illi uoce repleta 625

intercepta natat prorupto in sanguine lingua.
stabat adhuc, donec transmissa morte per artus
labitur inmorsaque cadens obmutuit hasta.
uos quoque, Thespiadae, cur infitatus honora
arcuerim fama? fratris moribunda leuabat 630
membra solo Periphas (nil indole clarius illa
nec pietate fuit), laeua marcentia colla
sustentans dextraque latus; singultibus artum
exhaurit thoraca dolor, nec uincla coercent
undantem fletu galeam, cum multa gementi 635
pone grauis curuas perfringit lancea costas
exit et in fratrem cognataque pectora telo
conserit. ille oculos etiamnum in luce natantes
sistit et aspecta germani morte resoluit.
at cui uita recens et adhuc in uulnere uires 640
‘hos tibi complexus, haec dent’ ait ‘oscula nati.’
procubuere pares fatis, miserabile uotum
mortis, et alterna clauserunt lumina dextra.

protinus idem ultro iaculo parmaque Menoeten
proterrebat agens trepidis uestigia retro 645
passibus urgentem, donec defecit iniqua
lapsus humo, pariterque manus distractus in ambas
orat et a iugulo nitentem sustinet hastam:
‘parce per has stellis interlabentibus umbras,
per superos noctemque tuam; sine tristia Thebis 650
nuntius acta feram uulgique per ora pauentis
contempto te rege canam: sic inrita nobis
tela cadant, nullique tuum penetrabile ferro
pectus, et optanti uictor reueharis amico.’
dixerat. ille nihil uultum mutatus ‘inanes 655
perdis’ ait ‘lacrimas; et tu (ni fallor) iniquo
pollicitus mea colla duci: nunc arma diemque
proice; quid timidae sequeris compendia uitae?
bella manent.’ simul haec et crassum sanguine telum
iam redit; ille super dictis infensus amaris 660
prosequitur uictos: ‘non haec trieterica uobis
nox patrio de more uenit, non orgia Cadmi

cernitis aut auidas Bacchum scelerare parentes.
nebridas et fragiles thyrsos portare putastis
imbellem ad sonitum maribusque incognita ueris 665
foeda Celaenaea committere proelia buxo?
hic aliae caedes, alius furor: ite sub umbras,
o timidi paucique!’ haec intonat; ast tamen illi
membra negant, lassusque ferit praecordia sanguis.
iam sublata manus cassos defertur in ictus, 670
tardatique gradus, clipeum nec sustinet umbo
mutatum spoliis; gelidus cadit imber anhelos
pectore, tum crines ardentiaque ora cruentis
roribus et taetra morientum aspergine manant:
ut leo, qui campis longe custode fugato 675
Massylas depastus oues, ubi sanguine multo
luxuriata fames ceruixque et tabe grauatae
consedere iubae, mediis in caedibus astat
aeger, hians, uictusque cibus; nec iam amplius irae
crudescunt: tantum uacuis ferit aera malis 680
molliaque eiecta delambit uellera lingua.

ille etiam Thebas spoliis et sanguine plenus
isset et attonitis sese populoque ducique
ostentasset ouans, ni tu, Tritonia uirgo,
flagrantem multaque operis caligine plenum 685
consilio dignata uirum: ‘sate gente superbi
Oeneos, absentes cui dudum uincere Thebas
adnuimus, iam pone modum nimiumque secundis
parce deis: huic una fides optanda labori.
fortuna satis usus abi.’ restabat acerbis 690
funeribus socioque gregi non sponte superstes
Haemonides (ille haec praeuiderat, omina doctus
aeris et nulla deceptus ab alite) Maeon,
nec ueritus prohibere ducem, sed fata monentem
priuauere fide. uita miserandus inertis 695
damnatur; trepido Tydeus inmitia mandat:
‘quisquis es Aonidum, quem crastina munere nostro
manibus exemptum mediis Aurora uidebit,
haec iubeo perferre duci: cinge aggere portas,

tela noua, fragiles aeuo circum inspice muros, 700
praecipue stipare uiros densasque memento
multiplicare acies! fumantem hunc aspice late
ense meo campum: tales in bella uenimus.'

haec ait, et meritae pulchrum tibi, Pallas, honorem
sanguinea de strage parat, praedamque iacentem 705
comportat gaudens ingentiaque acta recenset.

quercus erat tenerae iam longum oblita iuuentae
aggere camporum medio, quam plurimus ambit
frondibus incuruis et crudo robore cortex.

huic leues galeas perfossaque uulnere crebro 710

inserit arma ferens, huic truncos ictibus enses
subligat et tractas membris spirantibus hastas.

corpora tunc atque arma simul cumulata superstans
incipit (oranti nox et iuga longa resultant):

'diua ferox, magni decus ingeniumque parentis, 715

bellipotens, cui torua genis horrore decoro

cassis, et asperso crudescit sanguine Gorgon,

nec magis ardentes Mauors hastataque pugnae

impulerit Bellona tubas, huic adnue sacro,

seu Pandionio nostras inuisere caedes 720

monte uenis, siue Aonia deuertis Itone

laeta choris, seu tu Libyco Tritone repexas

lota comas qua te biuigo temone frementem

intemeratarum uolucer rapit axis equarum:

nunc tibi fracta uirum spolia informesque dicamus 725

exuuias. at si patriis Porthaonis aruis

inferar et reduci pateat mihi Martia Pleuron,

aurea tunc mediis urbis tibi templa dicabo

collibus, Ionias qua despectare procellas

dulce sit, et flauo tollens ubi uertice pontum 730

turbidus obiectas Achelous Echinadas exit.

hic ego maiorum pugnas uultusque tremendos

magnanimum effingam regum, figamque superbis

arma tholis, quaeque ipse meo quaesita reuexi

sanguine, quaeque dabis captis, Tritonia, Thebis. 735

centum ibi uirgineis uotae Calydonides aris

Actaeas tibi rite faces et ab arbore casta
nectent purpureas niueo discrimine uittas,
peruigilemque focus ignem longaeua sacerdos
nutriet, arcanum numquam spretura pudorem. 740
tu bellis, tu pace feres de more frequentes
primitias operum, non indignante Diana.’
dixerat, et dulces iter instaurabat ad Argos.

Liber Tertius

At non Aoniae moderator perfidus aulae
nocte sub ancipiti, quamuis umentibus astris
longus ad auroram superet labor, otia somni
accipit; inuigilant animo scelerisque parati
supplicium exercent curae; tum plurima uersat, 5
pessimus in dubiis augur, timor. 'ei mihi' clamat,
'unde morae?' (nam prona ratus facilemque tot armis
Tydea, nec numero uirtutem animumque rependit)
'num regio diuersa uiae? num missus ab Argis
subsidio globus? an sceleris data fama per urbes 10
finitimas? paucosne, pater Gradiue, manuue
legimus indecores? at enim fortissimus illic
et Chromis et Dorylas et nostris turribus aequi
Thespiadae totos raperent mihi funditus Argos.
nec tamen ille meis, reor, impenetrabilis armis 15
aere gerens solidoque datos adamante lacertos
uenerat; heu segnes, quorum labor haeret in uno,
si conserta manus.' uario sic turbidus aestu
angitur ac sese culpat super omnia, qui non
orantem in mediis legatum coetibus ense 20
perculerit foedasque palam satiauerit iras.
iam pudet incepti, iam paenitet. ac uelut ille
fluctibus Ioniis Calabrae datus arbiter alno
nec rudis undarum (portus sed linquere amicos
purior Olenii frustra gradus impulit astri), 25
cum fragor hiberni subitus Iouis, omnia mundi
claustra tonant multusque polos inclinat Orion,
ipse quidem malit terras pugnatque reuerti,
fert ingens a puppe Notus, tunc arte relict
ingemit et caecas sequitur iam nescius undas: 30
talis Agenoreus ductor caeloque morantem
Luciferum et seros maerentibus increpat ortus.
ecce sub occiduas uersae iam Noctis habenas
astrorumque obitus, ubi primum maxima Tethys

impulit Eoo cunctantem Hyperiona ponto, 35
ima flagellatis, signum lugubre malorum,
ponderibus trepidauit humus, motusque Cithaeron
antiquas dedit ire niues; tunc uisa leuari
culmina septenaeque iugo concurrere portae.
et prope sunt causae: gelido remeabat Eoo 40
iratus fatis et tristis morte negata
Haemonides; necdum ora patent, dubiusque notari
signa dabat magnae longe manifesta ruinae
planctuque et gemitu; lacrimas nam protinus omnes
fuderat. haud aliter saltu deuertitur orbus 45
pastor ab agrestum nocturna strage luporum,
cuius erile pecus siluis inopinus abegit
imber et hibernae uentosa cacumina lunae.
luce patent caedes; domino perferre recentes
ipse timet casus, haustaque informis harena 50
questibus implet agros, stabulique silentia magni
odit et amissos longo ciet ordine tauros.
illum congestae portarum ad limina matres
ut solum uidere (nefas!), nulla agmina circum
magnanimosque duces, nil ausae quaerere tollunt 55
clamorem, qualis bello supremus apertis
urbibus, aut pelago iam descendente carina.
ut primum inuisi cupido data copia regis:
'hanc tibi de tanto donat ferus agmine Tydeus
infelicem animam, siue haec sententia diuum, 60
seu fortuna fuit, seu, quod pudet ira fateri,
uis inuicta uiri. uix credo et nuntius: omnes
procubuere, omnes. noctis uaga lumina testor
et socium manes et te, mala protinus ales,
qua redeo, non hanc lacrimis meruisse nec astu 65
crudelem ueniam atque inhonoraе munera lucis;
sed mihi iussa deum placitoque ignara moueri
Atropos atque olim non haec data ianua leti
eripuerе necem. iamque ut mihi prodiga uitae
pectora et extremam nihil horrescentia mortem 70
aspicias: bellum infandum ominibusque negatam

mouisti, funeste, aciem, dum pellere leges
 et consanguineo gliscis regnare superbus
 exule; te series orbarum excisa domorum
 plactibus adsiduis, te diro horrore uolantes 75
 quinquaginta animae circum noctesque diesque
 adsilient, neque enim ipse moror.' iam mouerat iras
 rex ferus, et tristes ignescunt sanguine uultus.
 inde ultro Phlegyas et non cunctator iniqui
 Labdacus (hos regni ferrum penes) ire manuque 80
 proturbare parant. sed iam nudauerat ensem
 magnanimus uates, et nunc trucis ora tyranni,
 nunc ferrum aspectans: 'numquam tibi sanguinis huius
 ius erit aut magno feries imperdita Tydeo
 pectora; uado equidem exultans ereptaque fata 85
 insequor et comites feror expectatus ad umbras.
 te superis fratrique++' et iam media orsa loquentis
 abscederat plenum capulo latus; ille dolori
 pugnat et ingentem nisu duplicatus in ictum
 corruit, extremisque animae singultibus errans 90
 alternus nunc ore uenit, nunc uulnere sanguis.
 excussae procerum mentes, turbataque mussant
 concilia; ast illum coniunx fidique parentes
 seruantem uultus et toruum in morte peracta,
 non longum reducem laetati, in tecta ferebant 95
 sed ducis infandi rabidae non hactenus irae
 stare queunt; uetat igne rapi, pacemque sepulcri
 impius ignaris nequiquam manibus arcet.

tu tamen egregius fati mentisque nec umquam
 (sic dignum est) passure situm, qui comminus ausus 100
 uadere contemptum reges, quaque ampla ueniret
 libertas, sancire uiam: quo carmine dignam,
 quo satis ore tuis famam uirtutibus addam,
 augur amate deis? non te caelestia frustra
 edocuit lauruque sua dignatus Apollo est, 105

...

105a

et nemorum Dodona parens Cirrhaeaeque uirgo
 audebit tacito populos suspendere Phoebus.

nunc quoque Tartareo multum diuisus Auerno
Elysias, i, carpe plagas, ubi manibus axis
inuius Ogygiis nec sontis iniqua tyranni 110
iussa ualent; durant habitus et membra cruentis
inuiolata feris, nudoque sub axe iacentem
et nemus et tristis uolucrum reuerentia seruat.

at nuptae exanimes puerique aegrique parentes
moenibus effusi per plana, per auia, passim 115
quisque suas auidi ad lacrimas, miserabile, currunt,
certamen, quos densa gradu comitantur euntes
milia solandi studio, pars uisere flagrant
unius acta uiri et tantos in nocte labores:
feruet iter gemitu et plangoribus arua reclamant. 120
ut uero infames scopulos siluamque nefandam
peruentum, ceu nulla prius lamenta nec atri
manassent imbres, sic ore miserrimus uno
exoritur fragor, aspectuque accensa cruento
turba furit: stat sanguineo discissus amictu 125
Luctus atrox caesoque inuitat pectore matres.
scrutantur galeas frigentum inuentaue monstrant
corpora, prociduae super externosque suosque.
hae pressant in tabe comas, hae lumina signant
uulneraque alta rigant lacrimis, pars spicula dextra 130
nequiquam parcente trahunt, pars molliter aptant
bracchia trunca loco et ceruicibus ora reponunt.

at uaga per dumos uacuique in puluere campi
magna parens iuuenum, gemini nunc funeris, Ide
squalentem sublata comam liuentiaque ora 135
ungue premens (nec iam infelix miserandaque, uerum
terror inest lacrimis), per et arma et corpora passim
canitiem impexam dira tellure uolutans
quaerit inops natos omnique in corpore plangit.
Thessalis haud aliter bello gauisa recenti, 140
cui gentile nefas hominem renouare canendo,
multifida attollens antiqua lumina cedro
nocte subit campos uersatque in sanguine functum
uulgus et explorat manes, cui plurima busto

imperet ad superos: animarum maesta queruntur 145
concilia, et nigri pater indignatur Auerni.

illi in secessu pariter sub rupe iacebant
felices, quos una dies, manus abstulit una,
peruia uulneribus media trabe pectora nexi.
ut uidit lacrimisque oculi patuere profusis: 150
‘hosne ego complexus genetrix, haec oscula, nati,
uestra tuor? sic uos extremo in fine ligauit
ingenium crudele necis? quae uulnera tractem,
quae prius ora premam? uosne illa potentia matris,
uos uteri fortuna mei, qua tangere diuos 155
rebar et Ogygias titulis anteire parentes?
at quanto melius dextraque in sorte iugatae,
quis steriles thalami nulloque ululata dolore
respexit Lucina domum! mihi quippe malorum
causa labor; sed nec bellorum in luce patenti 160
conspicui fatis aeternaque gentibus ausi
quaesistis miserae uulnus memorabile matri,
sed mortem obscuram ~numerosaque funera passi,~
heu quantus furto cruor et sine laude iacetis!
quin ego non dextras miseris complexibus ausim 165
diuidere et tanti consortia rumpere leti:
ite diu fratres indiscretique supremis
ignibus et caros urna confundite manes!’

nec minus interea digesta strage suorum
hic Cthonium coniunx, hic mater Penthea clamat 170
Astyoche, puerique rudes, tua, Phaedime, proles,
amissum didicere patrem, Marpessaque pactum
Phyllea, sanguineumque lauant Acamanta sorores.
tunc ferro retegunt siluas collisque propinqui
annosum truncant apicem, qui conscius actis 175
noctis et inspexit gemitus; ibi grandior aeuo
ante rogos, dum quisque suo nequit igne reuelli,
concilium infaustum dictis mulcebat Aletes:
‘saepe quidem infelix uarioque exercita ludo
fatorum gens nostra fuit, Sidonius ex quo 180
hospes in Aonios iecit sata ferrea sulcos,

unde noui fetus et formidata colonis
arua suis. sed nec ueteris cum regia Cadmi
fulmineum in cinerem monitis Iunonis iniquae
consedit, neque funerea cum laude potitus 185
infelix Athamas trepido de monte ueniret,
semianimem heu laeto referens clamore Learchum,
hic gemitus Thebis, nec tempore clarius illo
Phoenissae sonuere domus, cum lassa furorem
uicit et ad comitum lacrimas expauit Agaue. 190
una dies similis fato specieque malorum
aequa fuit, qua magniloquos luit impia flatus
Tantalus, innumeris cum circumfusa ruinis
corpora tot raperet terra, tot quaereret ignes.
talis erat uulgi status, et sic urbe relictas 195
primaeuque senesque et longo examine matres
inuidiam planxere deis miseroque tumultu
bina per ingentes stipabant funera portas.
meque ipsum memini (necdum apta doloribus aetas)
flesse tamen gemituque meos aequasse parentes 200
illa tamen superi. nec quod tibi, Delia, castos
prolapsum fontes specula temerare profana
heu dominum insani nihil agnouere Molossi,
deflerim magis, aut uerso quod sanguine fluxit
in subitos regina lacus: sic dura Sororum 205
pensa dabant uisumque Ioui. nunc regis iniqui
ob noxam inmeritos patriae tot culmina ciues
exuimus, nec adhuc calcati foederis Argos
fama subit, et iam bellorum extrema dolemus.
quantus equis quantusque uiris in puluere crasso 210
sudor! io quanti crudele rubebitis amnes!
uiderit haec bello uiridis manus: ast ego doner
dum licet igne meo terraque insternar auita!
haec senior, multumque nefas Eteoclis aceruat
crudelem infandumque uocans poenasque daturum. 215
unde ea libertas? iuxta illi finis et aetas
tota retro, seraeque decus uelit addere morti.

haec sator astrorum iamdudum e uertice mundi

prospectans primoque imbutas sanguine gentes
Gradium acciri propere iubet. ille furentes 220
Bistonas et Geticas populatus caedibus urbes
turbidus aetherias currus urgebat ad arces,
fulmine cristatum galeae iubar armaque in auro
tristia, terrificis monstrorum animata figuris,
incutiens: tonat axe polus clipeique cruenta 225
lux rubet, et solem longe ferit aemulus orbis.
hunc ubi Sarmaticos etiamnum efflare labores
Iuppiter et tota perfusum pectora belli
tempestate uidet: 'talis mihi, nate, per Argos,
talis abi, sic ense madens, hac nubilus ira. 230
exturbent resides frenos et cuncta perosi
te cupiant, tibi praecipites animasque manusque
deuoeant; rape cunctantes et foedera turba,
cui dedimus; tibi fas ipsos incendere bello
caelicolas pacemque meam. iam semina pugnae 235
ipse dedi: remeat portans inmania Tydeus
ausa, ducis scelus et, turpis primordia belli,
insidias fraudesque, suis quas ultus in armis.
adde fidem. uos, o superi, meus ordine sanguis,
ne pugnare odiis, neu me temptare precando 240
certetis; sic Fata mihi nigraeque Sororum
iurauere colus: manet haec ab origine mundi
fixa dies bello, populiue in proelia nati.
quodni me ueterum poenas sancire malorum
gentibus et diros sinitis punire nepotes 245
(arcem hanc aeternam mentisque sacraria nostrae
testor et Elysios, etiam mihi numina, fontes)
ipse manu Thebas correptaque moenia fundo
excutiam uersasque solo super Inacha tecta
effundam turrets aut stagna in caerula uerram 250
imbre superiecto, licet ipsa in turbine rerum
Iuno suos colles templumque amplexa laboret.'
dixit, et attoniti iussis; mortalia credas
pectora, sic cuncti uocemque animosque tenebant:
non secus ac longa uentorum pace solutum 255

aequor et imbelli recubant ubi litora somno,
siluarumque comas et abacto flamine nubes
mulcet iners aestas; tunc stagna lacusque sonori
detumuerē, tacent exusti solibus amnes.

gaudet ouans iussis et adhuc temone calenti 260
feruidus in laeuum torsit Gradius habenas.
iamque iter extremum caelique abrupta tenebat,
cum Venus ante ipsos nulla formidine gressum
figit equos; cessere retro iam iamque rigentes
suppliciter posuere iubas. tunc pectora summo 265
adclinata iugo uultumque obliqua madentem
incipit (interea dominae uestigia iuxta
spumantem proni mandunt adamanta iugales):
‘bella etiam in Thebas, socer o pulcherrime, bella
ipse paras ferroque tuos abolere nepotes? 270
nec genus Harmoniae nec te conubia caelo
festa nec hae quicquam lacrimae, furibunde, morantur?
criminis haec merces? hoc fama pudorque relictus,
hoc mihi Lemniacae de te meruere catenae?
perge libens; at non eadem Volcania nobis 275
obsequia, et laesi seruit tamen ira mariti!
illum ego perpetuis mihi desudare caminis
si iubeam uigilesque operi transmittere noctes,
gaudeat ornatusque nouos ipsique labore
arma tibi; tu++sed scopulos et aena precando 280
flectere corda paro; solum hoc tamen anxia, solum
obtestor, quid me Tyrio sociare marito
progeniem caram infaustisque dabas hymenaeis?
dum fore praeclaros armis et uiuida rebus
pectora uipereo Tyrios de sanguine inactas 285
demissumque Iouis serie genus, a! mea quanto
Sithonia mallem nupsisset uirgo sub Arcto
trans Borean Thracasque tuos! indigna parumne
pertulimus, diuae Veneris quod filia longum
reptat et Illyricas deiecat uirus in herbas? 290
nunc gentem inmeritam++’ lacrimas non pertulit ultra
Bellipotens; hastam laeua transumit et alto

(haud mora) desiluit curru clipeoque receptam
laedit in amplexu dictisque ita mulcet amicis:
‘o mihi bellorum requies et sacra uoluptas 295
unaque pax animo; soli cui tanta potestas
diuorumque hominumque meis occurrere telis
impune et media quamuis in caede frementes
hos adsistere equos, hunc ensem auellere dextrae:
nec mihi Sidonii genialia foedera Cadmi 300
nec tua cara fides (ne falsa incessere gaude!)
exciderunt: prius in patrui deus infera mergar
stagna et pallentes agar exarmatus ad umbras.
sed nunc fatorum monitus mentemque supremi
iussus obire patris (neque enim Vulcania tali 305
imperio manus apta legi), quo pectore contra
ire Iouem dictasque parem contemnere leges,
cui modo (pro uires!) terras caelumque fretumque
attremere oranti tantosque ex ordine uidi
delituisse deos? sed ne mihi corde supremos 310
concipe, cara, metus: quando haec mutare potestas
nulla datur, cum iam Tyriis sub moenibus ambae
bellabunt gentes, adero et socia arma iuuabo.
tunc me sanguineo late deferuere campo
res super Argolicas haud sic deiecta uidebis; 315
hoc mihi ius, nec fata uetant.’ sic orsus aperto
flagrantes inmisit equos. non ocius alti
in terras cadit ira Iouis, si quando niualem
Othryn et Arctoae gelidum caput institit Ossae
armauitque in nube manum: uolat ignea moles 320
saeua dei mandata ferens, caelumque trisulca
territat omne coma iamdudum aut ditibus agris
signa dare aut ponto miseros inuoluere nautas.
iamque remensus iter fesso Danaeia Tydeus
arua gradu uiridisque legit deuexa Prosymnae 325
terribilis uisu: stant fulti puluere crines,
squalidus ex umeris cadit alta in uulnera sudor,
insomnesque oculos rubor excitat, oraque retro
sorbet anhela sitis; mens altum spirat honorem

conscia factorum. sic nota in pascua taurus 330
bellator redit, aduerso cui colla suoque
sanguine proscissisque natant palearibus armi;
tunc quoque lassa tumet uirtus multumque superbit
pectore despecto; uacua iacet hostis harena
turpe gemens crudosque uetat sentire dolores. 335
talis erat; medias etiam non destitit urbes,
quidquid et Asopon ueteresque interiacet Argos,
inflammare odiis, multumque et ubique retexens
legatum sese Graia de gente petendis
isse super regnis profugi Polynicis, at inde 340
uim, noctem, scelus, arma, dolos, ea foedera passum
regis Echionii, fratri sua iura negari.
prona fides populis; deus omnia credere suadet
Armipotens, geminatque acceptos Fama pauores.

utque introgressus portas (et forte uerendos 345
concilio pater ipse duces cogebat Adrastus)
improuisus adest, iam illinc a postibus aulae
uociferans: 'arma, arma uiri, tuque optime Lernaee
ductor, magnanimum si quis tibi sanguis auorum,
arma para! nusquam pietas, non gentibus aequum 350
fas aut cura Iouis; melius legatus adissem
Sauromatas rabidos seruatoremque cruentum
Bebrycii nemoris. nec iussa incuso pigetue
officii: iuuat isse, iuuat, Thebasque nocentes
explorasse manu; bello me, credite, bello, 355
ceu turrem ualidam aut artam compagibus urbem,
delecti insidiis instructique omnibus armis
nocte doloque uiri nudum ignarumque locorum
nequiquam clausere; iacent in sanguine mixti
ante urbem uacuam. nunc o nunc tempus in hostes, 360
dum trepidi exanguesque metu, dum funera portant,
nunc, socer, haec dum non manus excidit; ipse ego fessus
quingenta illis heroum inmanibus umbris
uulneraque ista ferens putri insiccata cruore
protinus ire peto!' trepidi de sedibus astant 365
Inachidae, cunctisque prior Cadmeius heros

accurrit uultum deiectus et 'o ego diuis
 inuisus uitaeque nocens haec uulnera cerno
 integer? hosne mihi reditus, germane, parabas?
 in me haec tela dabas! pro uitae foeda cupido! 370
 infelix, facinus fratri tam grande negaui.
 et nunc uestra quidem maneant in pace quieta
 moenia, nec uobis tanti sim causa tumultus
 hospes adhuc. scio (nec me adeo res dextra leuauit)
 quam durum natis, thalamo quam triste reuelli, 375
 quam patria; non me ullius domus anxia culpet
 respectentue truces obliquo limine matres.
 ibo libens certusque mori, licet optima coniunx
 auditusque iterum reuocet socer; hunc ego Thebis,
 hunc, germane, tibi iugulum et tibi, maxime Tydeu, 380
 debeo.' sic uariis pertemptat pectora dictis
 obliquatque preces. commotae questibus irae
 et mixtus lacrimis caluit dolor; omnibus ultro
 non iuuenum modo, sed gelidis et inertibus aeuo
 pectoribus mens una subit, uiduare penates, 385
 finitimas adhibere manus, iamque ire. sed altus
 consiliis pater imperiique haud flectere molem
 inscius: 'ista quidem superis curaeque medenda
 linquite, quaeso, meae: nec te germanus inulto
 scepra geret, neque nos auidi promittere bellum. 390
 at nunc egregium tantoque in sanguine ouantem
 excipite Oeniden, animosaque pectora laxet
 sera quies: nobis dolor haud rationis egebit.'
 turbati extemplo comites et pallida coniunx
 Tydea circum omnes fessum bellique uiaeque 395
 stipantur. laetus mediis in sedibus aulae
 constitit, ingentique exceptus terga columna,
 uulnera dum lymphis Epidaurius eluit Idmon
 (nunc uelox ferro, nunc ille tepentibus herbis
 mitior), ipse alta seductus mente renarrat 400
 principia irarum, quaeque orsus uterque uicissim,
 quis locus insidiis, tacito quae tempora bello,
 qui contra quantique duces, ubi maximus illi

sudor, et indicio seruatum Maeona tristi
 exponit. cui fida manus proceresque socerque 405
 astupet oranti, Tyriusque incenditur exul.
 soluerat Hesperii deuexo margine ponti
 flagrantes Sol pronus equos rutilamque lauabat
 Oceani sub fonte comam, cui turba profundi
 Nereos et rapidis accurrunt passibus Horae, 410
 frenaque et auratae textum sublime coronae
 deripiunt, laxant calidis umentia loris
 pectora; pars meritos uertunt ad molle iugales
 gramen et erecto currum temone supinant.
 Nox subiit curasque hominum motusque ferarum 415
 composuit nigroque polos inuoluit amictu,
 illa quidem cunctis, sed non tibi mitis, Adraste,
 Labdacioque duci: nam Tydea largus habebat
 perfusum magna uirtutis imagine somnus.
 et iam noctiuagas inter deus armifer umbras 420
 desuper Arcadiae fines Nemeaeaque rura
 Taenariumque cacumen Apollineasque Therapnas
 armorum tonitru ferit et trepidantia corda
 implet amore sui. comunt Furor Iraque cristas,
 frena ministrat equis Pauor armiger. at uigil omni 425
 Fama sono uanos rerum succincta tumultus
 anteuolat currum flatuque impulsa gementum
 alipedum trepidas denso cum murmure plumas
 excutit: arguet enim stimulis auriga cruentis
 facta, infecta loqui, curruque infestus ab alto 430
 terga comasque deae Scythica pater increpat hasta.
 qualis ubi Aeolio dimissos carcere Ventos
 dux prae se Neptunus agit magnoque uolentes
 incitat Aegaeo; tristic comitatus eunti
 circum lora fremunt Nimbique Hiemesque profundae 435
 Nubilaque et uulso terrarum sordida fundo
 Tempestas: dubiae motis radicibus obstant
 Cyclades, ipsa tua Mycono Gyaroque reuelli,
 Dele, times magnique fidem testaris alumni.
 septima iam nitidum terris Aurora deisque 440

purpureo uehit ore diem, Perseius heros
cum primum arcana senior sese extulit aula,
multa super bello generisque tumentibus amens
incertusque animi, daret armis iura nouosque
gentibus incuteret stimulos, an frena teneret 445
irarum et motos capulis adstringeret enses.
hinc pacis tranquilla mouent, atque inde pudori
foeda quies, flectique noua dulcedine pugnae
difficiles populi; dubio sententia tandem
sera placet, uatum mentes ac prouida ueri 450
sacra mouere deum. sollers tibi cura futuri,
Amphiarae, datur, iuxtaque Amythaone cretus
iam senior (sed mente uiret Phoeboque) Melampus
adsociat passus: dubium cui pronus Apollo
oraque Cirrhaea satiarit largius unda. 455
principio fibris pecudumque in sanguine diuos
explorant; iam tum pauidis maculosa bidentum
corda negant diraque nefas minitanti uena.
ire tamen uacuoque sedet petere omina caelo.

mons erat audaci seductus in aethera dorso 460
(nomine Lernaei memorant Aphasanta coloni)
gentibus Argolicis olim sacer; inde ferebant
nubila suspenso celerem temerasse uolatu
Persea, cum raptos pueri perterrita mater
prospexit de rupe gradus ac paene secuta est. 465
hoc gemini uates sanctam canentis oliuae
fronde comam et niueis ornati tempora uittis
euadunt pariter, madidos ubi lucidus agros
ortus et argentes laxauit sole pruinas.
ac prior Oeclides solitum prece numen amicat: 470
'Iuppiter omnipotens (nam te pernicibus alis
addere consilium uolucresque implere futuri
ominaque et causas caelo deferre latentes
accipimus), non Cirrha deum promiserit antro
certius, aut frondes lucis quas fama Molossis 475
Chaonias sonuisse tibi, licet aridus Hammon
inuideat Lyciaeque parent contendere sortes

Niliacumque pecus patrioque aequalis honori
Branchus et undosae qui rusticus accola Pisae
Pana Lycaonia nocturnum exaudit in umbra: 480
ditior ille animi, cui tu, Dictae, secundas
impuleris manifestus aues. mirum unde, sed olim
hic honor alitibus, superae seu conditor aulae
sic dedit effusum chaos in noua semina texens,
seu quia mutatae nostraque ab origine uersis 485
corporibus subiere notos, seu purior axis
amotumque nefas et rarum insistere terris
uera docent: tibi, summe sator terraeque deumque,
scire licet: nos Argolicae primordia pugnae
uenturumque sinas caelo praenosse laborem. 490
si datur et duris sedet haec sententia Parcis
soluere Echionias Lernaesa cuspide portas,
signa feras laeuusque tones; tunc omnis in astris
consonet arcana uolucris bona murmura lingua.
si prohibes, hic nocte moras dextrisque profundum 495
alitibus praetexe diem.’ sic fatus et alto
membra locat scopulo; tunc plura ignotaque iungit
numina et inmensi fruitur caligine mundi.

postquam rite diu partiti sidera, cunctas
perlegere animis oculisque sequacibus auras, 500
tunc Amythaonius longo post tempore uates:
‘nonne sub excelso spirantis limite caeli,
Amphiarae, uides, cursus ut nulla serenos
ales agat liquidoque polum complexa meatu
pendeat aut fugiens placabile clanxerit omen? 505
non comes obscurus tripodum, non fulminis ardens
uector adest, flauaeque sonans auis unca Mineruae
non uenit auguriis melior; quin uultur et altis
desuper accipitres exultauere rapinis.
monstra uolant: dirae stridunt in nube uolucres, 510
nocturnaeque gemunt striges et feralia bubo
damna canens. quae prima deum portenta sequamur?
hisne dari, Thymbraee, polum? simul ora recuruo
ungue secant rabidae planctumque imitantibus alis

exagitant zephyros et plumea pectora caedunt.’ 515
ille sub haec: ‘equidem uarii, pater, omina Phoebi
saepe tuli: iam tum, prima cum pube uirentem
semideos inter pinus me Thessala reges
duceret, hic casus terraeque marisque canentem
obstipuere duces, nec me uentura locuto 520
saepius in dubiis auditus Iasoni Mopsus.
sed similes non ante metus aut astra notauī
prodigiosa magis; quamquam maiora parantur.
huc aduerte animum: clara regione profundi
aetheros innumeri statuerunt agmina cyni. 525
siue hos Strymonia Boreas eiecit ab Arcto,
seu fecunda refert placidi clementia Nili.
fixerunt cursus: has rere in imagine Thebas:
nam sese inmoti gyro atque in pace silentes
ceu muris ualloque tenent. sed fortior ecce 530
aduentat per inane cohors; septem ordine fuluo
armigeras summi Iouis exultante caterua
intuor: Inachii sint hi tibi, concipe, reges.
inuasere globum niuei gregis uncaque pandunt
caedibus ora nouis et strictis unguibus instant. 535
cernis inexperto rorantes sanguine uentos,
et plumis stillare diem? quae saeua repente
uictores agitat leto Iouis ira sinistri?
hic excelsa petens subita face solus inarsit
summisitque animos, illum uestigia adortum 540
maiorum uolucrum tenerae deponitis alae.
hic hosti implicitus pariter ruit, hunc fuga retro
uoluit agens sociae linquentem fata cateruae.
hic nimbo glomeratus obit, hic praepete uiua
pascitur inmorians; spargit caua nubila sanguis. 545
quid furtim inlacrimas? illum, uenerande Melampu,
qui cadit, agnosco.’ trepidos sic mole futuri
cunctaque iam rerum certa sub imagine passos
terror habet uates; piget inrupisse uolantum
concilia et caelo mentem insertasse uetanti, 550
auditique odere deos. unde iste per orbem

primus uenturi miseris animantibus aeger
creuit amor? diuumne feras hoc munus, an ipsi,
gens auida et parto non umquam stare quieti,
eruimus quae prima dies, ubi terminus aeuī, 555
quid bonus ille deum genitor, quid ferrea Clotho
cogitet? hinc fibrae et uolucrum per nubila sermo
astrorumque uices numerataque semita lunae
Thessalicumque nefas. at non prior aureus ille
sanguis auum scopulisque satae uel robore gentes 560
mentibus his usae; siluas amor unus humumque
edomuisse manu; quid crastina uolueret aetas
scire nefas homini. nos, prauum et flebile uulguS,
scrutati penitus superos: hinc pallor et irae,
hinc scelus insidiaeque et nulla modestia uoti. 565

ergo manu uittas damnataque uertice sarta
deripit abiectaue inhonorus fronde sacerdos
inuiso de monte redit; iam bella tubaeque
comminus, absentesque fremunt sub pectore Thebae.
ille nec aspectum uulgi, nec fida tyranni 570
conloquia aut coetus procerum perferre, sed atra
sede tegi, et superum clausus negat acta fateri
(te pudor et curae retinent per rura, Melampu):
bissenos premit ora dies populumque ducesque
extrahit incertis. et iam suprema Tonantis 575
iussa fremunt agrosque uiris annosaque uastant
oppida; bellipotens prae se deus agmina passim
mille rapit; liquere domos dilectaue laeti
conubia et primo plorantes limine natos:
tantus in attonitos cecidit deus. arma paternis 580
postibus et fixos superum ad penetralia currus
uellere amor; tunc fessa putri robigine pila
haerentesque situ gladios in saeua recurant
uulnera et attrito cogunt iuuenescere saxo.
hi teretes galeas magnorumque aerea suta 585
thoracum et tunicas Chalybum squalore crepantes
pectoribus temptare, alii Gortynia lentant
cornua; iam falces auidis et aratra caminis

rastraque et incurui saeuum rubuere ligones.
caedere nec ualidas sanctis e stirpibus hastas, 590
nec pudor emerito clipeum uestisse iuuenco.
inrupere Argos maestique ad limina regis
bella animis, bella ore fremunt; it clamor ad auras,
quantus Tyrrheni gemitus salis, aut ubi temptat
Enceladus mutare latus; super igneus antris 595
mons tonat: exundant apices, fluctusque Pelorus
contrahit, et sperat tellus abrupta reuerti.

atque hic ingenti Capaneus Mauortis amore
excitus et longam pridem indignantia pacem
corda tumens (huic ampla quidem de sanguine prisco 600
nobilitas; sed enim ipse manu praegressus auorum
facta, diu tuto superum contemptor et aequi
impatiens largusque animae, modo suaserit ira),
unus ut e siluis Pholoes habitator opacae
inter et Aetnaeos aequus consurgere fratres, 605
ante fores, ubi turba ducum uulgique frementis,
Amphiarae, tuas 'quae tanta ignauia' clamat,
'Inachidae uosque o socio de sanguine Achiui?
unius (heu pudeat!) plebeia ad limina ciuis
tot ferro accinctae gentes animisque paratae 610
pendemus? non si ipse cauo sub uertice Cirrhae
(quisquis is est, timidis famaеque ita uisus) Ao
mugiat insano penitus seclusus in antro,
expectare queam dum pallida uirgo tremendas
nuntiet ambages. uirtus mihi numen et ensis 615
quem teneo! iamque hic timida cum fraude sacerdos
exeat, aut hodie, uolucrum quae tanta potestas,
experiar.' laetum fremit adsensuque furentem
implet Achaea manus. tandem prorumpere adactus
Oeclides: 'alio curarum agitante tumultu 620
non equidem effreno iuuenis clamore profani
dictorumque metu, licet hic insana minetur,
elicior tenebris; alio mihi debita fato
summa dies, uetitumque dari mortalibus armis.
sed me uester amor nimiusque arcana profari 625

Phoebus agit; uobis uentura atque omne quod ultra est
pandere maestus eo; nam te, uesane, moneri
ante nefas, unique tacet tibi noster Apollo.
quo, miseri, fatis superisque obstantibus arma,
quo rapitis? quae uos Furiarum uerbera caecos 630
exagitant? adeone animarum taedet? et Argos
exosi? nil dulce domi? nulla omina curae?
quid me Persei secreta ad culmina montis
ire gradu trepido superumque inrumpere coetus
egistis? potui pariter nescire quis armis 635
casus, ubi atra dies, quae fati exordia cunctis,
quae mihi. consulti testor penetralia mundi
et uolucrum adfatus et te, Thymbraee, uocanti
non alias tam saeue mihi, quae signa futuri
pertulerim: uidi ingentis portenta ruinae, 640
uidi hominum diuumque metus hilaremque Megaeram
et Lachesin putri uacuantem saecula penso.
proicite arma manu: deus ecce furentibus obstat,
ecce deus! miseri, quid pulchrum sanguine uicto
Aoniam et diri saturare noualia Cadmi? 645
sed quid uana cano, quid fixos arceo casus?
ibimus.' hic presso gemuit semel ore sacerdos.
illum iterum Capaneus: 'tuus o furor auguret uni
ista tibi, ut serues uacuos inglorius annos
et tua non umquam Tyrrhenus tempora circum 650
clangor eat. quid uota uirum meliora moraris?
scilicet ut uanis auibus natoque domoque
et thalamis potiare iacens, sileamus inulti
Tydeos egregii perfossum pectus et arma
foederis abrupti? quodsi bella efferat Graios 655
ferre uetas, i Sidonios legatus ad hostes:
haec pacem tibiserta dabunt. tua prorsus inani
uerba polo causas abstrusa atque omina rerum
eliciunt? miseret superum, si carmina curae
humanaeque preces. quid inertia pectora terres? 660
primus in orbe deos fecit timor! et tibi tuto
nunc eat iste furor; sed prima ad classica cum iam

hostilem Ismenon galeis Dircenque bibemus,
ne mihi tunc, moneo, lituos atque arma uolenti
obuius ire pares uenisque aut alite uisa 665
bellorum proferre diem: procul haec tibi mollis
infula terrificique aberit dementia Phoebi:
illic augur ego et mecum quicumque parati
insanire manu.' rursus fragor intonat ingens
hortantum et uasto subter uolat astra tumultu. 670
ut rapidus torrens, animos cui uerna ministrant
flamina et exuti concreto frigore montes,
cum uagus in campos frustra prohibentibus exit
obicibus, resonant permixto turbine tecta,
arua, armenta, uiri, donec stetit improbus alto 675
colle minor magnoque inuenit in aggere ripas:
haec alterna ducum nox interfusa diremit.

at gemitus Argia uiri non amplius aequo
corde ferens sociumque animo miserata dolorem,
sicut erat, laceris pridem turpata capillis, 680
et fletu signata genas, ad celsa uerendi
ibat tecta patris paruumque sub ubere caro
Thessandrum portabat auo iam nocte suprema
ante nouos ortus, ubi sola superstite Plaustro
Arctos ad Oceanum fugientibus inuidet astris 685
utque fores iniit magnoque adfusa parenti est:
'cur tua cum lacrimis maesto sine coniuge supplex
limina nocte petam, cessem licet ipsa profari,
scis genitor. sed iura deum genialia testor
teque, pater, non ille iubet sed peruigil angor. 690
ex quo primus Hymen mouitque infausta sinistram
Iuno facem, semper lacrimis gemituque propinquo
exturbata quies. non si mihi tigridis horror
aequoreaeque super rigeant praecordia cautes,
ferre queam; tu solus opem, tu summa medendi 695
iura tenes; da bella, pater, generique iacentis
aspice res humiles, atque hanc, pater, aspice prolem
exulis; huic olim generis pudor. o ubi prima
hospitia et iunctae testato numine dextrae?

hic certe est quem fata dabant, quem dixit Apollo; 700
non egomet tacitos Veneris furata calores
culpatamue facem: tua iussa uerenda tuosque
dilexi monitus. nunc qua feritate dolentis
despiciam questus? nescis, pater optime, nescis
quantus amor castae misero nupsisse marito. 705
et nunc maesta quidem graue et inlaetabile munus,
ut timeam doleamque, rego; sed cum oscula rumpet
maesta dies, cum rauca dabunt abeuntibus armis
signa tubae saeuoque genas fulgebitis auro,
ei mihi, care parens, iterum fortasse rogabo!’ 710

illius umentis carpens pater oscula uultu:
‘non equidem has umquam culparim, nata, querelas;
pone metus, laudanda rogas nec digna negari.
sed mihi multa dei (nec tu sperare quod urges
desine), multa metus regnique uolubile pondus 715
subiciunt animo. ueniet qui debitus istis,
nata, modus neque te incassum fleuisse quereris.
tu solare uirum, neu sint dispendia iustae
dura morae: magnos cunctamur, nata, paratus.
proficitur bello.’ dicentem talia nascens 720
lux mouet ingentesque iubent adsurgere curae.

Liber Quartus

Tertius horrentem zephyris laxauerat annum
Phoebus et angusto cogebat limite uernum
longius ire diem, cum fracta impulsaque fatis
consilia et tandem miseri data copia belli.
prima manu rutilam de uertice Larisaeo 5
ostendit Bellona facem dextraque trabalem
hastam intorsit agens, liquido quae stridula caelo
fugit et Aoniae celso stetit aggere Dirces.
mox et castra subit ferroque auroque coruscis
mixta uiris turmale fremit; dat euntibus enses, 10
plaudit equos, uocat ad portas; hortamina fortes
praeueniunt, timidisque etiam breuis addita uirtus.

dicta dies aderat. cadit ingens rite Tonanti
Gradiuoque pecus, nullisque secundus in extis
pallet et armatis simulat sperare sacerdos. 15
iamque suos circum pueri nuptaeque patresque
funduntur mixti summisque a postibus obstant.
nec modus est lacrimis: rorant clipeique iubaeque
triste salutantum, et cunctis dependet ab armis
suspiranda domus; galeis iuuat oscula clausis 20
inserere amplexuque truces deducere conos.
illi, quis ferrum modo, quis mors ipsa placebat,
dant gemitus fractaeque labant singultibus irae.
sic ubi forte uiris longum super aequor ituris,
cum iam ad uela noti et scisso redit ancora fundo, 25
haeret amica manus: certant innectere collo
bracchia, manantesque oculos hinc oscula turbant,
hinc magni caligo maris, tandemque relictis
stant in rupe tamen; fugientia carbasa uisu
dulce sequi, patriosque dolent crebrescere uentos. 30
[stant tamen et nota puppim de rupe salutant.]

nunc mihi, Fama prior mundique arcana Vetustas,
cui meminisse ducum uitasque extendere curae,
pande uiros, tuque, o nemoris regina sonori,

Calliope, quas ille manus, quae mouerit arma 35
Gradiuus, quantas populis solauerit urbes,
sublata molire lyra: neque enim altior ulli
mens hausto de fonte uenit. rex tristis et aeger
pondere curarum propiorque abeuntibus annis
inter adhortantes uix sponte incedit Adrastus, 40
contentus ferro cingi latus; arma manipuli
pone ferunt, uolucres portis auriga sub ipsis
comit equos, et iam inde iugo luctatur Arion.
huic armat Larisa uiros, huic celsa Prosymna,
aptior armentis Midea pecorosaque Phlius, 45
quaeque pauet longa spumantem ualle Charadron
Neris, et ingenti turritae mole Cleonae
et Lacedaemonium Thyrea lectura cruorem.
iunguntur memores transmissi ab origine regis,
qui Drepani scopulos et oliuiferae Sicyonis 50
culti serunt, quos pigra uado Langia tacenti
lambit et anfractu riparum incuruus Elisson.
saeuus honos fluuiio: Stygias lustrare seueris
Eumenidas perhibetur aquis; huc mergere suetae
ora et anhelantes poto Phlegethonte cerastas, 55
seu Thracum uertere domos, seu tecta Mycenes
impia Cadmeumue larem; fugit ipse natantes
amnis, et innumeris liuescunt stagna uenenis.
it comes Inoas Ephyre solata querelas
Cenchreaeque manus, uatum qua conscius amnis 60
Gorgoneo percussus equo, quaque obiacet alto
Isthmos et a terris maria inclinata repellit.
haec manus Adrastum numero ter mille secuti
exultant; pars gaesa manu, pars robora flammis
indurata diu (non unus namque manipulis 65
mos neque sanguis) habent, teretes pars uertere fundas
adsueti uacuoque diem praecingere gyro.
ipse annis sceptrisque subit uenerabilis aequae:
ut possessa diu taurus meat arduus inter
pascua iam laxa ceruice et inanibus armis, 70
dux tamen: haud illum bello attemptare iuuenis

sunt animi; nam trunca uident de uulnere multo
cornua et ingentes plagarum in pectore nodos.

proxima longaeuo profert Dircaeus Adrasto
signa gener, cui bella fauent, cui commodat iras 75
cuncta cohors: huic et patria de sede uolentes
aduenere uiri, seu quos mouet exul (et haesit
tristibus aucta fides), seu quis mutare potentes
praecipuum, multi, melior quos causa querenti
conciliat; dederat nec non socer ipse regendas 80
Aegion Arenenque, et quas Theseia Troezen
addit opes, ne rara mouens inglorius iret
agmina, neu raptos patriae sentiret honores.
idem habitus, eadem arma uiro, quae debitus hospes
hiberna sub nocte tulit: Teumesius implet 85
terga leo et gemino lucent hastilia ferro,
aspera uulnifico subter latus ense riget Sphinx.
iam regnum matrisque sinus fidasque sorores
spe uotisque tenet, tamen et de turre suprema
attonitam totoque extantem corpore longe 90
respicit Argian; haec mentem oculosque reducit
coniugis et dulces auertit pectore Thebas.

ecce inter medios patriae ciet agmina gentis
fulmineus Tydeus, iam laetus et integer artus,
ut primae strepuere tubae: ceu lubricus alta 95
anguis humo uerni blanda ad spiramina solis
erigitur liber senio et squalentibus annis
exutus laetisque minax interuiret herbis:
a miser, agrestum si quis per gramina hianti
obuius et primo fraudauerit ora ueneno. 100
huic quoque praesentes Aetolis urbibus adfert
belli fama uiros: sensit scopulosa Pylene
fletaque cognatis auibus Meleagria Pleuron
et praeceps Calydon et quae Ioue prouocat Iden
Olenos Ioniis et fluctibus hospita portu 105
Chalcis et Herculea turpatus gymnade uultus
amnis; adhuc imis uix truncam attollere frontem
ausus aquis glaucoque caput summersus in antro

maeret, anhelantes aegrescunt puluere ripae.
 omnibus aeratae propugnant pectora crates, 110
 pilaque saeua manu; patrius stat casside Mauors.
 undique magnanimum pubes delecta coronant
 Oeniden, hilarem bello notisque decorum
 uulneribus; non ille minis Polynicis et ira
 inferior, dubiumque adeo cui bella gerantur. 115
 maior at inde nouis it Doricus ordo sub armis,
 qui ripas, Lyrcee, tuas, tua litora multo
 uomere suspendunt, fluuiorum ductor Achium,
 Inache (Persea neque enim uiolentior exit
 amnis humo, cum Taurum aut Pliadas hausit aquosas 120
 spumeus et genero tumuit Ioue), quos celer ambit
 Asterion Dryopumque trahens Erasinus aristas,
 et qui rura domant Epidauria (dexter Iaccho
 collis at Hennaeae Cereri negat); auia Dyme
 mittit opem densasque Pylos Neleia turmas; 125
 nondum nota pylos iuuenisque aetate secunda
 Nestor, et ire tamen peritura in castra negauit.
 hos agit at pulchraeque docet uirtutis amorem
 arduus Hippomedon; capiti tremit aerea cassis
 ter niueum scandente iuba, latus omne sub armis 130
 ferrea suta terunt, umeros ac pectora late
 flammeus orbis habet, perfectaue uiuit in auro
 nox Danaï: sontes Furiarum lampade nigra
 quinquaginta ardent thalami; pater ipse cruentis
 in foribus laudatque nefas atque inspicit enses. 135
 illum Palladia sonipes Nemeaeus ab arce
 deuehit arma pauens umbraque inmane uolanti
 implet agros longoque attollit puluere campum.
 non aliter siluas umeris et utroque refringens
 pectore montano duplex Hylaeus ab antro 140
 praecipitat: pauet Ossa uias, pecudesque feraeque
 procubuere metu; non ipsis fratribus horror
 afuit, ingenti donec Peneia saltu
 stagna subit magnumque obiectus detinet amnem.
 quis numerum ferri gentesque et robora dictu 145

aequarit mortale sonans? suus excit in arma
antiquam Tiryntha deus; non fortibus illa
infecunda uiris famaue inmanis alumni
degenerat, sed lapsa situ fortuna, neque addunt
robur opes; rarus uacuis habitator in aruis 150
monstrat Cyclopum ductas sudoribus arces.
dat tamen haec iuuenum tercentum pectora, uulgus
innumerus bello, quibus haud ammenta nec enses
triste micant: flauae capiti tergoque leonum
exuuiæ, gentilis honos; et pineus armat 155
stipes, inexhaustis artantur tela pharetris.
Herculeum pæana canunt uastataque monstros
omnia; frondosa longum deus audit ab Oeta.
dat Nemea comites, et quas in proelia uires
sacra Cleonæi cogunt uincta Molochi. 160
gloria nota casae, foribus simulata salignis
hospitis arma dei, paruoque ostenditur aruo,
robur ubi et laxos qua reclinauerit arcus
ilice, qua cubiti sedeant uestigia terra.

at pedes et toto despectans uertice bellum 165
quattuor indomitis Capaneus erepta iuuenis
terga superque rigens iniectu molis aenae
uersat onus; squallet triplici ramosa corona
Hydra recens obitu: pars anguibus aspera uiuis
argento caelata micat, pars arte reperta 170
conditur et fuluo moriens nigrescit in auro;
circum amnis torpens et ferro caerula Lerna.
at laterum tractus spatiosaque pectora seruat
nexilis innumero Chalybum subtemine thorax,
horrendum, non matris, opus; galeaeque corusca 175
prominet arce Gigans; atque uni missilis illi
cuspidē praefixa stat frondibus orba cupressus.
huic parere dati, quos fertilis Amphigenia
planaque Messene montosaque nutrit Ithome,
quos Thryon et summis ingestum montibus Aepy, 180
quos Helos et Pteleon, Getico quos flebile uati
Dorion; hic fretus doctas anteire canendo

Aonidas mutos Thamyris damnatus in annos
ore simul citharaque (quis obuia numina temnat?)
conticuit praeceps, qui non certamina Phoebi 185
nosset et inlustres Satyro pendente Celaenas.

iamque et fatidici mens expugnata fatiscit
auguris; ille quidem casus et dira uidebat
signa, sed ipsa manu cunctanti iniecerat arma
Atropos obrueratque deum, nec coniugis absunt 190
insidiae, uetitoque domus iam fulgurat auro.
hoc aurum uati fata exitiale monebant
Argolico; scit et ipsa (nefas!), sed perfida coniunx
dona uiro mutare uelit, spoliisque potentis
inminet Argiae raptoque excellere cultu. 195
illa libens (nam regum animos et pondera belli
hac nutare uidet, pariter si prouidus heros
militet) ipsa sacros gremio Polynicis amati
exuerat cultus haud maesta atque insuper addit:
‘non haec apta mihi nitidis ornatibus’ inquit 200
‘tempora, nec miserae placeant insignia formae
te sine: sat dubium coetu solante timorem
fallere et incultos aris aduertere crines.
scilicet (infandum!), cum tu claudare minanti
casside ferratusque sonas, ego diuitis aurum 205
Harmoniae dotale geram? dabit aptius isto
fors decus, Argolicasque habitu praestabo maritas,
cum regis coniunx, cum te mihi sospite templa
uotiuus implenda choris; nunc induat illa
quae petit et bellante potest gaudere marito.’ 210
sic Eriphylaeos aurum fatale penates
inrupit scelerumque ingentia semina mouit,
et graue Tisiphone risit gauisa futuris.

Taenariis hic celsus equis, quam dispare coetu
Cyllarus ignaro generarat Castore prolem, 215
quassat humum; uatem cultu Parnasia monstrant
uellera: frondenti crinitur cassis oliua,
albaque puniceas interplicat infula cristas.
arma simul pressasque iugo moderatur habenas.

hinc atque inde morae iaculis, et ferrea curru 220
silua tremit; procul ipse graui metuendus in hasta
eminet et clipeo uictum Pythona coruscat.
huius Apollineae currum comitantur Amyclae,
quos Pylos et dubiis Malea uitata carinis
plaudentique habiles Caryae resonare Dianae, 225
quos Pharis uolucrumque parens Cythereia Messe,
Taygetique phalanx et oloriferi Eurotae
dura manus. deus ipse uiros in puluere crudo
Arcas alit nudaeque modos uirtutis et iras
ingenerat; uigor inde animis et mortis honora 230
dulce sacrum. gaudent natorum fata parentes
hortanturque mori, deflent iamque omnis ephebum
turba, coronato contenta est funere mater.
frena tenent duplexque inserto missile nodo,
exerti ingentes umeros, chlamys horrida pendet, 235
et cono Ledaeus apex. non hi tibi solum,
Amphiarae, merent: auget resupina maniplos
Elis, depressae populus subit incola Pisae,
qui te, flaue, natant, terris Alpheae Sicanis
aduena tam longo non umquam infecte profundo. 240
curribus innumeris late putria arua lacesunt
et bellis armenta domant: ea gloria genti
infando de more et fractis durat ab usque
axibus Oenomai; strident spumantia morsu
uincula, et effossas niueus rigat imber harenas. 245
tu quoque Parrhasias ignara matre cateruas
(a rudis annorum, tantum noua gloria suadet!),
Parthenopaeae, rapis; saltus tunc forte remotos
torua parens (neque enim haec iuueni foret ire potestas)
pacabat cornu gelidique auersa Lycae. 250
pulchrior haud ulli triste ad discrimen ituro
uultus et egregiae tanta indulgentia formae;
nec desunt animi, ueniat modo fortior aetas.
quas non ille duces nemorum fluuiisque dicata
numina, quas magno non abstulit igne Napaeas? 255
ipsam, Maenalia puerum cum uidit in umbra,

Dianam, tenero signantem gramina passu,
ignouisse ferunt comiti, Dictaeaque tela
ipsam et Amyclaeas umeris aptasse pharetras.
prosilit audaci Martis percussus amore, 260
arma, tubas audire calens et puluere belli
flauentem sordere comam captoque referri
hostis equo: taedet nemorum, titulumque nocentem
sanguinis humani pudor est nescire sagittas.
igneus ante omnes auro micat, igneus ostro, 265
undantemque sinum nodis inrugat Hiberis,
imbelli parma pictus Calydonia matris
proelia; trux laeua sonat arcus, et aspera plumis
terga Cydonea gorytos harundine pulsant
electro pallens et iaspide clarus Eoa. 270
cornipedem trepidos suetum praeuertere ceruos,
uelatum geminae deiectu lyncis et arma
mirantem grauioris heri, sublimis agebat,
dulce rubens uiridique genas spectabilis aeuo.
Arcades huic ueteres astris lunaque priores 275
agmina fida datis, nemorum quos stirpe rigenti
fama satos, cum prima pedum uestigia tellus
admirata tulit; nondum arua domusque nec urbes,
conubiisque modus; quercus laurique ferebant
cruda puerperia, ac populos umbrosa creauit 280
fraxinus, et feta uiridis puer excidit orno.
hi lucis stupuisse uices noctisque feruntur
nubila et occiduum longe Titana secuti
desperasse diem. rarescunt alta colonis
Maenala, Parthenium fugitur nemus, agmina bello 285
Rhipeque et Stratie uentosaque donat Enispe.
non Tegea, non ipsa deo uacat alite felix
Cyllene templumque Aleae nemorale Mineruae
et rapidus Clitor et qui tibi, Pythie, Ladon
paene socer candensque iugis Lampia niuosus 290
et Pheneos nigro Styga mittere credita Diti.
uenit et Idaeis ululatibus aemulus Azan
Parrhasiique duces, et quae risistis, Amores,

grata pharetrato Nonacria rura Tonanti,
diues et Orchomenos pecorum et Cynosura ferarum 295
Aepytiος idem ardor agros Psophidaque celsam
uastat et Herculeo uulgatos robore montes,
monstriferumque Erymanthon et aerisonum Stymphalon.
Arcades hi, gens una uiris, sed dissona cultu
scinditur: hi Paphias myrtos a stirpe recuruant 300
et pastoralι meditantur proelia trunco,
his arcus, his tela sudes, his cassida crines
integit, Arcadii morem tenet ille galeri,
ille Lycaoniae rictu caput asperat ursae.
hos belli coetus iurataque pectora Marti 305
milite uicinae nullo iuuere Mycenae;
funereae tunc namque dapes mediiue recursus
solis, et hic alii miscebant proelia fratres.

iamque Atalantaeas implerat nuntius aures
ire ducem bello totamque impellere natum 310
Arcadium: tremuere gradus, elapsaque iuxta
tela; fugit siluas pernicioꝝ alite uento
saxa per et plenīs obstantia flumina ripis,
qualis erat, correpta sinus et uertice flauum
crinem sparsa Noto; raptis uelut aspera natis 315
praedatoꝝ equi sequitur uestigia tigris.
ut stetit aduersisque impegit pectora frenis
(ille ad humum pallens): ‘unde haec furibunda cupido,
nate, tibi? teneroque unde improba pectore uirtus?
tu bellis aptare uiros, tu pondera ferre 320
Martis et ensiferas inter potes ire cateruas?
quamquam utinam quires! nuper te pallida uidi,
dum premis obnixo uenabula comminus apro,
poplite succiduo resupinum ac paene ruentem;
et nī curuato torsissem spicula cornu, 325
nunc ubi bella tibi? nīl te mea tela iuuabunt
nec teretes arcus maculis nec discolor atris
hic, cui fidis, equus; magnis conatibus instas,
uix Dryadum thalamis Erymanthiadumque furori
Nympharum mature puer. sunt omina uera: 330

mirabar cur templa mihi tremuisse Dianae
nuper et inferior uultu dea uisa, sacrisque
exuuiæ cecidere tholis; hoc segnior arcus
difficilesque manus et nullo in uulnere certæ.
expecta dum maior honos, dum firmitus æuum, 335
dum roseis uenit umbra genis uultusque recedunt
ore mei; tunc bella tibi ferrumque, quod ardes,
ipsa dabo et nullo matris reuocabere fletu.
nunc refer arma domum! uos autem hunc ire sinetis,
Arcades, o saxis nimirum et robore nati?' 340
plura cupit; fusi circum natusque ducesque
solantur minuuntque metus, et iam horrida clangunt
signa tubæ. nequit illa pio dimittere natum
complexu multumque duci commendat Adrasto.

at parte ex alia Cadmi Mauortia plebes, 345
maesta ducis furiis nec molli territa fama,
quando his uulgatum descendere uiribus Argos,
tardius illa quidem regis causæque pudore,
uerum bella mouet. nulli destringere ferrum
impetus aut umeros clipeo clausisse paterno 350
dulce nec alipedum iuga comere, qualia belli
gaudia; deiecti trepidas sine mente, sine ira
promisere manus; hic ægra in sorte parentem
unanimum, hic dulces primæuæ coniugis annos
ingemit et gremio miseros ad crescere natos. 355
bellator nulli caluit deus; ipsa uetusto
moenia lapsa situ magnæque Amphionis arces
iam fessum senio nudant latus, et fide sacra
æquatos caelo surdum atque ignobile muros
firmat opus. tamen et Boeotis urbibus ultrix 360
adspirat ferri rabies, nec regis iniqui
subsidio quantum socia pro gente mouentur.
ille uelut pecoris lupo expugnator opimi,
pectora tabenti sanie grauis hirtaque saetis
ora cruentata deformis hiantia lana, 365
decedit stabulis huc illuc turbida uersans
lumina, si duri comperta clade sequantur

pastores, magnique fugit non inscius ausi.

accumulat crebros turbatrix Fama pauores:

hic iam dispersos errare Asopide ripa 370

Lernaeos equites, hic te, bacchate Cithaeron,

ille rapi Teumeson ait noctisque per umbras

nuntiat excubiis uigiles arsisse Plataeas.

nam Tyrios sudare lares et sanguine Dircen

inriguam fetusque novos iterumque locutam 375

Sphinga petris, cui non et scire licentia passim

et uidisse fuit? nouus his super anxia turbat

corda metus: sparsis subito correpta canistris

siluestris regina chori decurrit in aequum

uertice ab Ogygio trifidamque huc tristis et illuc 380

lumine sanguineo pinum disiectat et ardens

erectam attonitis implet clamoribus urbem:

‘omnipotens Nysae pater, cui gentis auitae

pridem lapsus amor, tu nunc horrente sub Arcto

bellica ferrato rapidus quatis Ismara thyrsos 385

pampineumque iubet nemus inreptare Lycurgo,

aut tumidum Gangen aut claustra nouissima Rubrae

Tethyos Eoasque domos flagrante triumpho

perfuris, aut Hermi de fontibus aureis exis:

at tua progenies, positis gentilibus armis 390

quae tibi festa litant, bellum lacrimasque metumque

cognatumque nefas, iniusti munera regni,

pendimus. aeternis potius me, Bacche, pruinis

trans et Amazoniis ululatum Caucason armis

siste ferens, quam monstra ducum stirpemque profanam 395

eloquar. en urges (alium tibi, Bacche, furorem

iurauit): similes uideo concurrere tauros;

idem ambobus honos unusque ab origine sanguis;

ardua conlatis obnixa cornua miscent

frontibus alternaque truces moriuntur in ira. 400

tu peior, tu cede, nocens qui solus auita

gramina communemque petis defendere montem.

a miseri morum! bellastis sanguine tanto

et saltum dux alter habet.’ sic fata gelatis

uultibus et Baccho iam demigrante quieuit. 405

at trepidus monstro et uariis terroribus impar
longaeui rex uatis opem tenebrasque sagaces
Tiresiae, qui mos incerta pauentibus, aeger
consultit. ille deos non larga caede iuuenum,
non alacri penna aut uerum salientibus extis, 410
nec tripode implicito numerisque sequentibus astra,
turea nec supra uolitante altaria fumo
tam penitus, durae quam Mortis limite manes
elicitos, patuisse refert; Lethaeaeque sacra
et mersum Ismeni subter confinia ponto 415
miscentis parat ante ducem, circumque bidentum
uisceribus laceris et odori sulphuris aura
graminibusque nouis et longo murmure purgat.

silua capax aevi ualidaque incurua senecta,
aeternum intonsae frondis, stat peruia nullis 420
solibus; haud illam brumae minuere, Notusue
ius habet aut Getica Boreas impactus ab Vrsa.
subter operta quies, uacuuque silentia seruat
horror et exclusae pallet male lucis imago.
nec caret umbra deo: nemori Latonia cultrix 425
additur; hanc piceae cedrique et robore in omni
effictam sanctis occultat silua tenebris.

huius inaspectae luco stridere sagittae
nocturnique canum gemitus, ubi limina patru
effugit inque nouae melior redit ora Dianae; 430
aut ubi fessa iugis, dulcesque altissima somnos
lux mouet, hic late iaculis circum undique fixis
effusam pharetra ceruicem excepta quiescit.
extra inmane patent, tellus Mauortia, campi;
fetus ager Cadmo, durus qui uomere primo 435
post consanguineas acies sulcosque nocentes
ausus humum uersare et putria sanguine prata
eruit; ingentes infelix terra tumultus
lucis adhuc medio solaque in nocte per umbras
expirat, nigri cum uana in proelia surgunt 440
terrigenae; fugit incepto tremibundus ab aruo

agricola insanique domum rediere iuueni.

hic senior uates (Stygiis accommoda quippe
terra sacris, uiuoque placent sola pingua tabo)
uelleris obscuri pecudes armentaque sisti 445
atra monet; quaecumque gregum pulcherrima ceruix
ducitur; ingemuit Dirce maestusque Cithaeron,
et noua clamosae stupere silentia ualles.
tum fera caeruleis intexit cornua sertis
ipse manu tractans, notaeque in limite siluae 450
principio largos nouies tellure cauata
inclinat Bacchi latices et munera uerni
lactis et Actaeos imbres suadumque cruorem
manibus; aggeritur quantum bibit arida tellus.
trunca dehinc nemora aduoluunt, maestusque sacerdos 455
tres Hecatae totidemque satis Acheronte nefasto
uirginibus iubet esse focos; tibi, rector Auerni,
quamquam infossus humo superat tamen agger in auras
pineus; hunc iuxta cumulo minor ara profundae
erigitur Cereri; frontes atque omne cupressus 460
intexit plorata latus. iamque ardua ferro
signati capita et frugum libamine puro
in uulnus cecidere greges; tunc innuba Manto
exceptum pateris praelibat sanguen, et omnes
ter circum acta pyras sancti de more parentis 465
semineces fibras et adhuc spirantia reddit
uiscera, nec rapidas cunctatur frondibus atris
subiectare faces. atque ipse sonantia flammis
uirgulta et tristes crepuisse ut sensit aceros
Tiresias (illi nam plurimus ardor anhelat 470
ante genas impletque cauos uapor igneus orbes)
exclamat (tremuere rogi et uox terruit ignem):
‘Tartareae sedes et formidabile regnum
Mortis inexpletae, tuque, o saeuissime fratrum,
cui seruire dati manes aeternaque sontum 475
supplicia atque imi famulatur regia mundi,
soluite pulsanti loca muta et inane seuerae
Persephones uulgusque caua sub nocte repostum

elicit, et plena redeat Stygia portitor alno.
ferre simul gressus, nec simplex manibus esto 480
in lucem remeare modus; tu separe coetu
Elysios, Persei, pios, uirgaque potenti
nubilus Arcas agat; contra per crimina functis,
qui plures Erebo pluresque e sanguine Cadmi,
angue ter excusso et flagranti praeuia taxo, 485
Tisiphone, dux pande diem, nec lucis egentes
Cerberus occursum capitum detorqueat umbras.'

dixerat, et pariter senior Phoebeaque uirgo
erexere animos; illi formidine nulla,
quippe in corde deus, solum timor obruit ingens 490
Oedipodioniden, uatisque horrenda canentis
nunc umeros nunc ille manus et uellera prensat
anxius inceptisque uelit desistere sacris.
qualis Gaetulae stabulantem ad confraga siluae
uenator longo motum clamore leonem 495
expectat firmans animum et sudantia nisu
tela premens; gelat ora pauor gressusque tremescunt,
quis ueniat quantusque, sed horrida signa frementis
accipit et caeca metitur murmura cura.

atque hic Tiresias nondum aduentantibus umbris: 500
'testor,' ait, 'diuae, quibus hunc saturauimus ignem
laeuaque conuulsae dedimus carchesia terrae,
iam nequeo tolerare moram. cassusne sacerdos
audior? an, rabido iubeat si Thessala cantu,
ibitis? et, Scythicis quotiens medicata uenenis 505
Colchis aget, trepido pallebunt Tartara motu?
nostri cura minor, si non attollere bustis
corpora nec plenas antiquis ossibus urnas
egerere et mixtos caelique Erebi sub unum
funestare deos libet aut exanguia ferro 510
ora sequi atque aegras functorum carpere fibras?
ne tenues annos nubemque hanc frontis opacae
spernite, ne, moneo: et nobis saeuire facultas.
scimus enim et quidquid dici noscique timetis
et turbare Hecaten (ni te, Thymbraee, uererer) 515

et triplicis mundi summum, quem scire nefastum.
illum++sed taceo: prohibet tranquilla senectus.
iamque ego uos++' auide subicit Phoebeia Manto:
'audiris, genitor, uulgusque exangue propinquat.
panditur Elysium chaos, et telluris opertae 520
dissilit umbra capax, siluaeque et nigra patescunt
flumina: liuentes Acheron eiecat harenas,
fumidus atra uadis Phlegethon incendia uoluit,
et Styx discretis interflua manibus obstat.
ipsum pallentem solio circumque ministras 525
funestorum operum Eumenidas Stygiaeque seueros
Iunonis thalamos et torua cubilia cerno.
in speculis Mors atra sedet dominoque silentes
adnumerat populos; maior superinminet ordo.
arbiter hos dura uersat Gortynius urna 530
uera minis poscens adigitque expromere uitas
usque retro et tandem poenarum lucra fateri.
quid tibi monstra Erebi, Scyllas et inane furentes
Centauros solidoque intorta adamante Gigantum
uincula et angustam centeni Aegaeonis umbram?' 535

'immo,' ait, 'o nostrae regimen uiresque senectae,
ne uulgata mihi. quis enim remeabile saxum
fallentesque lacus Tityonque alimenta uolucrum
et caligantem longis Ixiona gyris
nesciat? ipse etiam, melior cum sanguis, opertas 540
inspexi sedes, Hecate ducente, priusquam
obruit ora deus totamque in pectora lucem
detulit. Argolicas magis huc appelle precando
Thebanasque animas; alias auertere gressus
lacte quater sparsas maestoque excedere luco, 545
nata, iube; tum qui uultus habitusque, quis ardor
sanguinis adfusi, gens utra superbior adsit,
dic agedum nostramque mone per singula noctem.'

iussa facit carmenque serit, quo dissipat umbras,
quo reciet sparsas; qualis, si crimina demas, 550
Colchis et Aeaeo simulatrix litore Circe.
tunc his sacrificum dictis adfata parentem:

‘primus sanguineo summittit inertia Cadmus
ora lacu, iuxtaque uirum Cythereia proles
insequitur, geminusque bibit de uertice serpens. 555
terrigenae comites illos, gens Martia, cingunt,
quis aeui mensura dies, manus omnis in armis,
omnis et in capulo; prohibent obstantque ruuntque
spirantum rabie, nec tristi incumbere fossae
cura, sed alternum sitis exhaurire cruorem. 560
proxima natarum manus est fletique nepotes.
hic orbam Autonoe, et anhelam cernimus Ino
respectantem arcus et ad ubera dulce prementem
pignus, et oppositis Semelen a uentre lacertis.
Pentheia iam fractis genetrix Cadmeia thyrsis 565
iamque remissa deo pectusque adoperta cruentum
insequitur planctu; fugit ille per auia Lethes
et Stygios super usque lacus, ubi mitior illum
flet pater et lacerum componit corpus Echion.
tristem nosco Lycum dextramque in terga reflexum 570
Aeoliden, umero iactantem funus onusto.
necdum ille aut habitus aut uersae crimina formae
mutat Aristaeo genitus: frons aspera cornu,
tela manu, reicitque canes in uulnus hiantes.
ecce autem magna subit inuidiosa caterua 575
Tantalus et tumido percenset funera luctu,
nil deiecta malis; iuuat effugisse deorum
numina et insanae plus iam permittere linguae.’

taliam dum patri canit intemerata sacerdos,
illius elatis tremefacta adsurgere uittis 580
canities tenuisque impelli sanguine uultus.
nec iam firmanti baculo nec uirgine fida
nititur, erectusque solo, ‘desiste canendo,
nata,’ ait, ‘externae satis est mihi lucis, inertes
discedunt nebulae, et uultum niger exiit aer. 585
umbrisne an supero dimissus Apolline complet
spiritus? en uideo quaecumque audita. sed ecce
maerent Argolici deiecto lumine manes!
toruus Abas Proetusque nocens mitisque Phoroneus

truncatusque Pelops et saeuo puluere sordens 590
Oenomaus largis umectant imbribus ora.
auguror hinc Thebis belli meliora. quid autem
hi grege condenso (quantum arma et uulnera monstrant,
pugnaces animae) nobis in sanguine multo
oraque pectoraque et falso clamore leuatas 595
intendunt sine pace manus? rex, fallor? an hi sunt
quingenta illi? cernis Cthoniumque Chrominique
Phegeaque et nostra praesignem Maeona lauro.
ne saeuite, duces, nihil hic mortalibus ausum,
credite, consiliis: hos ferrea neuerat annos 600
Atropos. existis casus: bella horrida nobis,
atque iterum Tydeus.' dicit, uittaque ligatis
frondibus instantes abigit monstratque cruorem.
 stabat inops comitum Cocyti in litore maesto
Laius, inmiti quem iam deus ales Auerno 605
reddiderat, dirumque tuens obliqua nepotem
(noscit enim uultu) non ille aut sanguinis haustus,
cetera ceu plebes, aliumue accedit ad imbrem,
inmortale odium spirans. sed prolicit ultro
Aonius uates: 'Tyriae dux inclute Thebes, 610
cuius ab interitu non ulla Amphionis arces
uidit amica dies, o iam satis ulte cruentum
exitium, et multum placata minoribus umbra,
quo miserande fugis? iacet ille in funere longo,
quem fremis, et iunctae sentit confinia mortis, 615
obsitus exhaustos paedore et sanguine uultus
eiectusque die: sors leto durior omni,
crede mihi! quaenam inmeritum uitare nepotem
causa tibi? confer uultum et satiare litanti
sanguine uenturasque uices et funera belli 620
pande, uel infensus uel res miserate tuorum.
tunc ego et optata uetitam transmittere Lethen
puppe dabo placidumque pia tellure reponam
et Stygiis mandabo deis.' mulcetur honoris
muneribus tingitque genas, dein talia reddit: 625
'cur tibi uersanti manes, aequaeue sacerdos,

lectus ego augurio tantisque potissimus umbris,
qui uentura loquar? satis est meminisse priorum.
nostrane praeclari (pudeat) consulta nepotes
poscitis? illum, illum sacris adhibete nefastis, 630
qui laeto fodit ense patrem, qui semet in ortus
uertit et indignae regerit sua pignora matri.
et nunc ille deos Furiarumque atra fatigat
concilia et nostros rogat haec in proelia manes.
quodsi adeo placui deflenda in tempora uates, 635
dicam equidem, quo me Lachesis, quo torua Megaera
usque sinunt: bellum, innumero uenit undique bellum
agmine, Lernaeosque trahit fatalis alumnos
Gradius stimulus; hos terrae monstra deumque
tela manent pulchrique obitus et ab igne supremo 640
sontes lege morae. certa est uictoria Thebis,
ne trepida, nec regna ferox germanus habebit
sed Furiae; geminumque nefas miserosque per enses
(ei mihi!) crudelis uincit pater.' haec ubi fatus
labitur et flexa dubios ambage relinquit. 645

interea gelidam Nemeen et conscia laudis
Herculeae dumeta uaga legione tenebant
Inachidae; iam Sidonias auertere praedas,
sternere, ferre domos ardent instantque. quis iras
flexerit, unde morae, medius quis euntibus error, 650
Phoebe, doce: nos rara manent exordia famae.

marcidus edomito bellum referebat ab Haemo
Liber; ibi armiferos geminae iam sidera brumae
orgia ferre Getas canumque uirescere dorso
Othryn et Icaria Rhodopen adsueuerat umbra, 655
et iam pampineos materna ad moenia currus
promouet; effrenae dextra laeuaque sequuntur
lynces, et uda mero lambunt retinacula tigres.
post exultantes spolia armentalia portant
seminecesque lupos scissasque Mimallones ursas. 660
nec comitatus iners: sunt illic Ira Furorque
et Metus et Virtus et numquam sobrius Ardor
succiduique gradus et castra simillima regi.

isque ubi puluerea Nemeen efferuere nube
conspicit et solem radiis ignescere ferri, 665
necdum compositas belli in certamina Thebas,
concussus uisis, quamquam ore et pectore marcet,
aeraque tympanaque et biforem reticere tumultum
imperat, attonitas qui circum plurimus aures,
atque ita: 'me globus iste meamque excindere gentem 670
apparat; ex longo recalet furor; hoc mihi saeuum
Argos et indomitae bellum ciet ira nouercae.
usque adeone parum cineri data mater iniquo
natalesque rogi quaeque ipse micantia sensi
fulgura? reliquias etiam fusaeque sepulcrum 675
paelicis et residem ferro petit impia Theben.
nectam fraude moras; illum, illum tendite campum,
tendite, io comites.' Hyrcanae ad signa iugales
intumuere iubas, dicto prius astitit aruis.

tempus erat medii cum solem in culmina mundi 680
tollit anghela dies, ubi tardus hiantibus aruis
stat uapor atque omnes admittunt aethera luci.
undarum uocat ille deas mediusque silentum
incipit: 'agrestes, fluuiorum numina, Nymphae,
et nostri pars magna gregis, perferte laborem 685
quem damus. Argolicos paulum mihi fontibus amnes
stagnaque et errantes obducite puluere riuos.
praecipuam Nemeen, qua nostra in moenia bellis
nunc iter, ex alto fugiat liquor; adiuuat ipse
Phoebus adhuc summo, cesset ni uestra uoluntas, 690
limite; uim coeptis indulgent astra, meaeque
aestifer Erigones spumat canis. ite uolentes,
ite in operta soli; post uos ego gurgite pleno
eliciam, et quae dona meis amplissima sacris
uester habebit honos, nocturnaque furta licentum 695
cornipedum et cupidus Faunorum arcebo rapinas.'
dixerat; ast illis tenuior percurrere uisus
ora situs, uiridisque comis exhorruit umor.
protinus Inachios haurit sitis ignea campos:
diffugere undae, squalent fontesque lacusque, 700

et caua feruenti durescunt flumina limo.
aegra solo macies, tenerique in origine culmi
inclinata seges, deceptum margine ripae
stat pecus, atque amnes quaerunt armenta natatos.
sic ubi se magnis refluus suppressit in antris 705
Nilus et Eoae liquentia pabula brumae
ore premit, fumant desertae gurgite ualles
et patris undosi sonitus expectat hiulca
Aegyptos, donec Phariis alimenta rogatus
donet agris magnumque inducat messibus annum. 710

aret Lerna nocens, aret Lyrceus et ingens
Inachus aduoluensque natantia saxa Charadrus
et numquam in ripis audax Erasinus et aequus
fluctibus Asterion, ille alta per auia notus
audiri et longe pastorum rumpere somnos. 715
[sic Hyperionios cum lux effrena per orbem
rapta ruit Phaethontis equos, magnumque laborem
discordes gemuere poli, dum pontus et arua
stellarumque ruunt crines, non amnibus undae,
non lucis mansere comae, sed multus ubique 720
ignis, ubique faces et longa fluminis instar
indiget Aegaeon deceptus imagine ripae.]
una tamen tacitas, sed iussu numinis, undas,
haec quoque, secreta nutrit Langia sub umbra.
nondum illi raptus dederat lacrimabile nomen 725
Archemorus, nec fama deae; tamen auia seruat
et nemus et fluuium; manet ingens gloria nympham,
cum tristem Hypsipylen ducibus sudatus Achaeis
ludus et atra sacrum recolet trieteris Ophelten.

ergo nec ardentes clipeos uectare nec artos 730
thoracum nexus (tantum sitis horrida torret)
sufficiunt; non ora modo angustisque perusti
faucibus, interior sed uis quatit: aspera pulsu
corda, gelant uenae et siccis cruor aeger adhaeret
uisceribus; tunc sole putris, tunc puluere tellus 735
exhalat calidam nubem. non spumeus imber
manat equum: siccis inlidunt ora lupatis,

ora catenatas procul exertantia linguas;
nec legem dominosue pati, sed perfurit aruis
flammatum pecus. huc illuc impellit Adrastus 740
exploratores, si stagna Licymnia restent,
si quis Amymones superet liquor: omnia caecis
ignibus hausta sedent, nec spes umentis Olympi,
ceu flauam Libyen desertaque pulueris Afri
conlustrent nullaque umbratam nube Syenen. 745
tandem inter siluas (sic Euhius ipse pararat)
errantes subitam pulchro in maerore tuentur
Hypsipylen; illi quamuis et ad ubera Opheltes
non suos, Inachii proles infausta Lycurgi,
dependet (neglecta comam nec diues amictu), 750
regales tamen ore notae, nec mersus acerbis
extat honos. tunc haec adeo stupefactus Adrastus:
'diua potens nemorum (nam te uultusque pudorque
mortali de stirpe negant), quae laeta sub isto
igne poli non quaeris aquas, succurre propinquis 755
gentibus; Arquitenens seu te Latonia casto
de grege transmisit thalamis, seu lapsus ab astris
non humilis fecundat amor (neque enim ipse deorum
arbiter Argolidum thalamis nouus), aspice maesta
agmina. nos ferro meritas excindere Thebas 760
mens tulit, imbelli sed nunc sitis aspera fato
summittitque animos et inertia robora carpit.
da fessis in rebus opem, seu turbidus amnis,
seu tibi foeda palus, nihil hac in sorte pudendum,
nil humile est; tu nunc Ventis pluuioque rogaris 765
pro Ioue, tu refugas uires et pectora bellis
exanimata reple: sic hoc tibi sidere dextro
crescat onus. tantum reduces det flectere gressus
Iuppiter, o quanta belli donabere praeda!
Dircaeos tibi, diua, greges numerumque rependam 770
plebis, et hic magna lucus signabitur ara.'
dixit, et orantis media inter anhelitus ardens
uerba rapit, cursuque animae labat arida lingua;
idem omnes pallorque uiros flatusque soluti

oris habet. reddit demisso Lemnia uultu: 775
‘diua quidem uobis, etsi caelestis origo est,
unde ego? mortales utinam haud transgressa fuisset
luctibus! altricem mandati cernitis orbam
pignoris; at nostris an quis sinus, uberaque ulla,
scit deus; et nobis regnum tamen et pater ingens++ 780
sed quid ego haec, fessosque optatis demoror undis?
mecum age nunc, si forte uado Langia perennes
seruat aquas; solet et rabidi sub limite Cancri
semper, et Icarii quamuis iuba fulguret astri,
ire tamen.’ simul haerentem, ne tarda Pelasgis 785
dux foret, a! miserum uicino caespite alumnum
(sic Parcae uoluere) locat ponique negantis
floribus aggestis et amico murmure dulces
solatur lacrimas: qualis Berecynthia mater,
dum paruum circa iubet exultare Tonantem 790
Curetas trepidos; illi certantia plaudunt
orgia, sed magnis resonat uagitibus Ide.

at puer in gremio uernae telluris et alto
gramine nunc faciles sternit procursibus herbas
in uultum nitens, caram modo lactis egeno 795
nutricem clangore ciens iterumque renidens
et teneris meditans uerba inluctantia labris
miratur nemorum strepitus aut obuia carpit
aut patulo trahit ore diem nemorique malorum
inscius et uitae multum securus inerrat. 800
sic tener Odrysia Mauors niue, sic puer ales
uertice Maenalio, talis per litora reptans
improbis Ortygiae latus inclinabat Apollo.

illi per dumos et opaca uiuentibus umbris
deuia: pars cingunt, pars arcta plebe sequuntur 805
praeaccelerantque ducem. medium subit illa per agmen
non humili festina modo; iamque amne propinquo
rauca sonat uallis, saxosumque impulit aures
murmur: ibi exultans conclamat ab agmine primus,
sicut erat leuibis tollens uexilla manipulis, 810
Argus, ‘aquae?’ longusque uirum super ora cucurrit

clamor, 'aquae!' sic Ambracii per litora ponti
nauticus in remis iuuenum monstrante magistro
fit sonus inque uicem contra percussa reclamat
terra, salutatus cum Leucada pandit Apollo. 815
incubere uadis passim discrimine nullo
turba simul primique, nequit discernere mixtos
aequa sitis, frenata suis in curribus intrant
armenta, et pleni dominis armisque feruntur
quadripedes; hos turbo rapax, hos lubrica fallunt 820
saxa, nec implicitos fluuio reuerentia reges
proterere aut mersisse uado clamantis amici
ora. fremunt undae, longusque a fontibus amnis
diripitur; modo lene uirens et gurgite puro
perspicuus, nunc sordet aquis egestus ab imis 825
alueus; inde tori riparum et proruta turbant
gramina; iam crassus caenoque et puluere torrens,
quamquam expleta sitis, bibitur tamen. agmina bello
decertare putes iustumque in gurgite Martem
perfurere aut captam tolli uictoribus urbem. 830

atque aliquis regum medio circumfluus amni:
'siluarum, Nemea, longe regina uirentum,
lecta Iouis sedes, quam tu non Herculis actis
dura magis, rabidi cum colla comantia monstri
angeret et tumidos animam angustaret in artus! 835
hac saeuisse tenus populorum in coepta tuorum
sufficiat; tuque o cunctis insuete domari
solibus, aeternae largitor corniger undae,
laetus eas, quacumque domo gelida ora resoluis
inmortale tumens; neque enim tibi cana repostas 840
bruma niues raptasque alio de fonte refundit
arcus aquas grauidiue indulgent nubila Cauri,
sed tuus et nulli ruis expugnabilis astro.
te nec Apollineus Ladon nec Xanthus uterque
Spercheosque minas Centaureusque Lycormas 845
praestiterint; tu pace mihi, tu nube sub ipsa
armorum festasque super celebrabere mensas
(a Ioue primus honos), bellis modo laetus ouantes

accipias fessisque libens iterum hospita pandas
flumina defensasque uelis agnoscere turmas.’ 850

Liber Quintus

Pulsa sitis fluuio, populataque gurgitis alueum
agmina linquebant ripas amnemque minorem;
acrior et campum sonipes rapit et pedes arua
implet ouans, rediere uiris animique minaeque
uotaque, sanguineis mixtum ceu fontibus ignem 5
hausissent belli magnasque in proelia mentes.
dispositi in turmas rursus legemque seueri
ordinis, ut cuique ante locus ductorque, monentur
instaurare uias. tellus iam puluere primo
crescit, et armorum transmittunt fulgura siluae. 10
qualia trans pontum Phariis defensa serenis
rauca Paraetonio decedunt agmina Nilo,
cum fera ponit hiems: illae clangore fugaci,
umbra fretis aruisque, uolant, sonat auis aether.
iam Borean imbresque pati, iam nare solutis 15
amnibus et nudo iuuat aestiuare sub Haemo.
hic rursus simili procerum uallante corona
dux Talaionides, antiqua ut forte sub orno
stabat et admoti nixus Polynicis in hastam:
'at tamen, o quaecumque es' ait 'cui gloria tanta, 20
uenimus innumerae fatum debere cohortes,
quem non ipse deum sator aspernetur honorem,
dic age, quando tuis alacres absistimus undis,
quae domus aut tellus, animam quibus hauseris astris.
dic quis et ille pater. neque enim tibi numina longe, 25
transierit fortuna licet, maiorque per ora
sanguis, et adflicto spirat reuerentia uultu.'
ingemit, et paulum fletu cunctata modesto
Lemnias orsa refert: 'inmania uulnera, rector,
integrare iubes, Furias et Lemnon et artis 30
arma inserta toris debellatosque pudendo
ense mares; redit ecce nefas et frigida cordi
Eumenis. o miserae, quibus hic furor additus! o nox!
o pater! illa ego nam, pudeat ne forte benignae

hospitis, illa, duces, raptum quae sola parentem 35
occului. quid longa malis exordia necto?

et uos arma uocant magnique in corde paratus.
hoc memorasse sat est: claro generata Thoante
seruitium Hypsipyle uestri fero capta Lycurgi.’

aduertere animos, maiorque et honora uideri 40
parque operi tanto; cunctis tunc noscere casus
ortus amor, pater ante alios hortatur Adrastus:
‘immo age, dum primi longe damus agmina uulgi
(nec facilis Nemea latas euoluere uires,
quippe obtenta comis et ineluctabilis umbra), 45
pande nefas laudesque tuas gemitusque tuorum,
unde hos aduenias regno deiecta labores.’

dulce loqui miseris ueteresque reducere questus.
incipit: ‘Aegaeo premitur circumflua Nereo
Lemnos, ubi ignifera fessus respirat ab Aetna 50
Mulciber; ingenti tellurem proximus umbra
uestit Athos nemorumque obscurat imagine pontum;
Thraces arant contra, Thracum fatalia nobis
litora, et inde nefas. florebat diues alumnis
terra, nec illa Samo fama Deloue sonanti 55
peior et innumeris quas spumifer adsilit Aegon.
dis uisum turbare domos, nec pectora culpa
nostra uacant: nullos Veneri sacrauimus ignes,
nulla deae sedes; mouet et caelestia quondam
corda dolor lentoque inrepunt agmine Poenae. 60
illa Paphon ueterem centumque altaria linquens,
nec uultu nec crine prior, soluisse iugalem
ceston et Idalias procul ablegasse uolucres
fertur. erant certe media quae noctis in umbra
diuam alios ignes maioraque tela gerentem 65
Tartareas inter thalamis uolitasse sorores
uulgarent, utque implicitis arcana domorum
anguibus et saeua formidine nupta replasset
limina nec fidi populum miserata mariti.
protinus a Lemno teneri fugistis Amores: 70
mutus Hymen uersaeque faces et frigida iusti

cura tori. nullae redeunt in gaudia noctes,
nullus in amplexu sopor est, Odia aspera ubique
et Furor et medio recubat Discordia lecto.
cura uiris tumidos aduersa Thracas in ora 75
eruere et saeuam bellando frangere gentem.
cumque domus contra stantesque in litore nati,
dulcius Edonias hiemes Arctonque frementem
excipere, aut tandem tacita post proelia nocte
fractorum subitas torrentum audire ruinas. 80
illae autem tristes (nam me tunc libera curis
uirginitas annique tegunt) sub nocte dieque
adsiduis aegrae in lacrimis solantia miscent
conloquia, aut saeuam spectant trans aequora Thracen.

Sol operum medius summo librabat Olympo 85
lucentes, ceu staret, equos; quater axe sereno
intonuit, quater antra dei fumantis anhelos
exeruere apices, Ventisque absentibus Aegon
motus et ingenti percussit litora ponto:
cum subito horrendas aeui matura Polyxo 90
tollitur in furias thalamisque insueta relictis
euolat. insano ueluti Teumesia Thyias
rapta deo, cum sacra uocant Idaeaeque suadet
buxus et a summis auditus montibus Euhan:
sic, erecta genas aciemque effusa trementi 95
sanguine, desertam rabidis clamoribus urbem
exagitat clausasque domos et limina pulsans
concilium uocat; infelix comitatus eunti
haerebant nati. atque illae non segnius omnes
erumpunt tectis, summasque ad Pallados arces 100
impetus: huc propere stipamur et ordine nullo
congestae; stricto mox ense silentia iussit
hortatrix scelerum et medio sic ausa profari:
“rem summam instinctu superum meritique doloris,
o uiduae (firmate animos et pellite sexum!) 105
Lemniades, sancire paro; si taedet inanes
aeternum seruare domos turpemque iuuentae
flore situm et longis steriles in luctibus annos,

inueni, promitto, uiam (nec numina desunt)
 qua renouanda Venus: modo par insumite robur 110
 luctibus, atque adeo primum hoc mihi noscere detur.
 tertia canet hiems: cui conubialia uincla
 aut thalami secretus honos? cui coniuge pectus
 intepuit? cuius uidit Lucina labores,
 dicite, uel iustos cuius pulsantia menses 115
 uota tument? qua pace feras uolucresque iugari
 mos datus! heu segnes! potuitne ultricia Graius
 uirginibus dare tela pater laetusque dolorum
 sanguine securos iuuenum perfundere somnos:
 at nos uulgi iners? quodsi propioribus actis 120
 est opus, ecce animos doceat Rhodopeia coniunx,
 ulta manu thalamos pariterque epulata marito.
 nec uos inmundi scelerum securae cogo.
 plena mihi domus atque ingens, en cernite, sudor.
 quattuor hos una, decus et solacia patris, 125
 in gremio (licet amplexu lacrimisque morentur)
 transadigam ferro saniemque et uulnera fratrum
 miscebo patremque super spirantibus addam.
 ecqua tot in caedes animum promittit?” agebat
 pluribus; aduerso nituerunt uela profundo: 130
 Lemnia classis erat. rapuit gauisa Polyxo
 fortunam atque iterat: “superisne uocantibus ultro
 desumus? ecce rates! deus hos, deus ultor in iras
 apportat coeptisque fauet. nec imago quietis
 uana meae: nudo stabat Venus ense uideri 135
 clara mihi somnosque super. ‘quid perditis aeuum?’
 inquit, ‘age auersis thalamos purgate maritis.
 ipsa faces alias melioraque foedera iungam.’
 dixit, et hoc ferrum stratis, hoc, credite, ferrum
 imposuit. quin, o miserae, dum tempus agi rem, 140
 consulite; en ualidis spumant euersa lacertis
 aequora, Bistonides ueniunt fortasse maritae.”
 hinc stimuli ingentes, magnusque aduoluitur astris
 clamor. Amazonio Scythiam feruere tumultu
 lunatumque putes agmen descendere, ubi arma 145

indulget pater et saeui mouet ostia Belli.
nec uarius fremor aut studia in contraria rapti
dissensus, ut plebe solet: furor omnibus idem,
idem animus solare domos iuuenumque senumque
praecipitare colos plenisque adfrangere paruos 150
uberibus ferroque omnes exire per annos.
tunc uiridi luco (lucus iuga celsa Mineruae
propter opacat humum niger ipse, sed insuper ingens
mons premit et gemina pereunt caligine soles),
hic sanxere fidem, tu Martia testis Enyo 155
atque inferna Ceres, Stygiaeque Acheronte recluso
ante preces uenere deae; sed fallit ubique
mixta Venus, Venus arma tenet, Venus admouet iras.
nec de more cruor: natum Charopeia coniunx
obtulit, accingunt sese et mirantia ferro 160
pectora congestisque auidae simul undique dextris
perfringunt, ac dulce nefas in sanguine uiuo
coniurant, matremque recens circumuolat umbra.
taliam cernenti mihi quantus in ossibus horror,
quisue per ora color! qualis cum cerua cruentis 165
circumuenta lupis, nullum cui pectore molli
robur et in uolucris tenuis fiducia cursu,
praecipitat suspensa fugam, iam iamque teneri
credit et elusos audit concurrere morsus.

illi aderant, primis iamque offendere carinae 170
litoribus, certant saltu contingere terram
praecipites. miseri, quos non aut horrida uirtus
Marte sub Odrysio, aut medii inclementia ponti
hauserit! alta etiam superum delubra uaporant
promissasque trahunt pecudes: niger omnibus aris 175
ignis, et in nullis spirat deus integer extis.
tardius umentis noctem deiecit Olympo
Iuppiter et uersum miti, reor, aethera cura
sustinuit, dum fata uetant, nec longius umquam
cessauere nouae perfecto sole tenebrae. 180
sera tamen mundo uenerunt astra, sed illis
et Paros et nemorosa Thasos crebraeque relucet

Cyclades; una graui penitus latet obruta caelo
Lemnos, in hanc tristes nebulae, et plaga caeca superne
textitur, una uagis Lemnos non agnita nautis. 185
iam domibus fusi et nemorum per opaca sacrorum
ditibus indulgent epulis uacuantque profundo
aurum inmane mero, dum quae per Strymona pugnae,
quis Rhodope gelidou labor sudatus in Haemo
enumerare uacat. nec non, manus impia, nuptae 190
serta inter festasque dapes quo maxima cultu
quaeque iacent; dederat Cytherea suprema
nocte uiros longoque breuem post tempore pacem
nequiquam et miseros perituro adflauerat igni.
conticuere chori, dapibus ludoque licenti 195
fit modus et primae decrescunt murmura noctis,
cum consanguinei mixtus caligine Leti
rore madens Stygio morituram amplectitur urbem
Somnus et implacido fundit grauia otia cornu
secernitque uiros. uigilant nuptaeque nurusque 200
in scelus, atque hilares acuunt fera tela Sorores.
inuasere nefas, cuncto sua regnat Erinys
pectore. non aliter Scythicos armenta per agros
Hyrcaenae clausere leae, quas exigit ortu
prima fames, audique implorant ubera nati. 205
quos tibi (nam dubito) scelerum de mille figuris
expediam casus? Helymum temeraria Gorge
euinctum ramis altaque in mole tapetum
efflantem somno crescentia uina superstans
uulnera disiecta rimatur ueste, sed illum 210
infelix sopor admota sub morte refugit.
turbidus incertumque oculis uigilantibus hostem
occupat amplexu, nec segnius illa tenentis
pone adigit costas donec sua pectora ferro
tangeret. is demum sceleri modus; ora supinat 215
blandus adhuc oculisque tremens et murmure Gorgen
quaerit et indigno non soluit brachia collo.
non ego nunc uulgi quamquam crudelia pandam
funera, sed propria luctus de stirpe recordor:

quod te, flauē Cydon, quod te per colla refūsis 220
intactum, Crenaeē, comis (quibus ubera mecum
obliquumque a patre genus), fortemque, timebam
quem desponsa, Gyan uidi lapsare cruentae
uulnere Myrmidones, quodque inter sēta torosque
barbara ludentem fodiebat Epopea mater. 225
flet super aequaeuum exarmata Lycaste
Cydimon, heu similes perituro in corpore uultus
aspiciens floremque genae et quas finxerat auro
ipsa comas, cum saeua parens iam coniuge fuso
astitit impellitque minis atque inserit ensem. 230
ut fera, quae rabiem placido desueta magistro
tardius arma mouet stimulisque et uerbere crebro
in mores negat ire suos, sic illa iacenti
incidit undantemque sinu conlapsa cruorem
excipit et laceros premit in noua uulnera crines. 235
ut uero Alcimedē etiamnum in murmure truncos
ferre patris uultus et egentem sanguinis ensem
conspexi, riguere comae atque in uiscera saeuus
horror iit: meus ille Thoas, mea dira uideri
dextra mihi! extemplo thalamis turbata paternis 240
inferor. ille quidem dudum (quis magna tuenti
somnus?) agit uersans secum, etsi lata recessit
urbe domus, quinam strepitus, quae murmura noctis,
cur fremibunda quies. trepido scelus ordine pando,
quis dolor, unde animi: “uis nulla arcere furentes; 245
hac sequere, o miserande; premunt aderuntque moranti,
et mecum fortasse cades,” his motus et artus
erexit stratis. ferimur per deuia uastae
urbis et ingentem nocturnae caedis aceruum
passim, ut quosque sacris crudelis uespera lucis 250
strauerat, occulta speculamur nube latentes.
hic impressa toris ora extantesque reclusis
pectoribus capulos magnarum et fragmina trunca
hastarum et ferro laceras per corpora uestes,
crateras pronos epulasque in caede natantes 255
cernere erat, iugulisque modo torrentis apertis

sanguine commixto redeuntem in pocula Bacchum.
hic iuuenum manus et nullis uiolabilis armis
turba senes, positique patrum super ora gementum
semineces pueri trepidas in limine uitae 260
singultant animas. gelida non saeuus Ossa
luxuriant Lapitharum epulae, si quando profundo
Nubigenae caluere mero: uix primus ab ira
pallor, et impulsis surgunt ad proelia mensis.
tunc primum sese trepidis sub nocte Thyoneus 265
detexit, nato portans extrema Thoanti
subsidia, et multa subitus cum luce refulsit.
agnoui: non ille quidem turgentia sertis
tempora nec flaua crinem distinxerat uua:
nubilus indignumque oculis liquentibus imbrem 270
adloquitur: “dum fata dabant tibi, nate, potentem
Lemnon et externis etiam seruare timendam
gentibus, haud umquam iusto mea cura labori
destitit: absciderunt tristes crudelia Parcae
stamina, nec dictis, supplex quae plurima fudi 275
ante Iouem frustra, lacrimisque auertere luctus
contigit; infandum natae concessit honorem.
accelerate fugam, tuque, o mea digna propago,
hac rege, uirgo, patrem, gemini qua bracchia muri
litus eunt: illa, qua rere silentia, porta 280
stat funesta Venus ferroque accincta furentes
adiuuat (unde manus, unde haec Mauortia diuae
pectora?). tu lato patrem committe profundo:
succedam curis,” ita fatus in aera rursus
soluitur et nostrum, uisus arcentibus umbris, 285
mitis iter longae clarauit limite flammae.
qua data signa sequor; dein curuo robore clausum
dis pelagi Ventisque et Cycladas Aegaeoni
amplexo commendo patrem, nec fletibus umquam
fit modus alternis, ni iam dimittat Eoo 290
Lucifer astra polo. tunc demum litore rauco
multa metu reputans et uix confisa Lyaeo
diuidor, ipsa gradu nitente, sed anxia retro

pectora; nec requies quin et surgentia caelo
 flamina et e cunctis prospectem collibus undas. 295
 exoritur pudibunda dies, caelumque retexens
 auersum Lemno iubar et declinia Titan
 opposita iuga nube refert. patuere furores
 nocturni, lucisque nouae formidine cunctis
 (quamquam inter similes) subitus pudor; impia terrae 300
 infodiunt scelera aut festinis ignibus urunt.
 iam manus Eumenidum captasque refugerat arces
 exaturata Venus; licuit sentire quid ausae,
 et turbare comas et lumina tingere fletu.
 insula diues agris opibusque armisque uirisque, 305
 nota situ et Getico nuper ditata triumpho,
 non maris incursu, non hoste, nec aethere laeuo
 perdidit una omnes orbata excisaque mundo
 indigenas: non arua uiri, non aequora uertunt,
 conticuere domus, cruor altus et oblita crasso 310
 cuncta rubent tabo, magnaue in moenibus urbis
 nos tantum et saeuī spirant per culmina manes.
 ipsa quoque arcanis tecti in penetralibus alto
 molior igne pyram, sceptrum super armaque patris
 inicio et notas regum uelamina uestes, 315
 ac prope maesta rogum confusis crinibus asto
 ense cruentato, fraudemque et inania busta
 plango metu, si forte premant, cassumque parenti
 omen et hac dubios leti precor ire timores.
 his mihi pro meritis, ut falsi criminis astu 320
 parta fides, regna et solio considerare patris
 (supplicium!) datur. anne illis obsessa negarem?
 accessi, saepe ante deos testata fidemque
 inmeritasque manus; subeo (pro dira potestas!)
 exangue imperium et maestam sine culmine Lemnon. 325
 iam magis atque magis uigiles dolor angere sensus,
 et gemitus clari, et paulatim inuisa Polyxo,
 iam meminisse nefas, iam ponere manibus aras
 concessum et multum cineres iurare sepultos.
 sic ubi ductorem trepidae stabulique maritum, 330

quem penes et saltus et adultae gloria gentis,
Massylo frangi stupuere sub hoste iuuencae,
it truncum sine honore pecus, regemque peremptum
ipse ager, ipsi amnes et muta armenta queruntur.

ecce autem aerata dispellens aequora prora 335
Pelias intacti late subit hospita ponti
pinus; agunt Minyae, geminus fragor ardua canet
per latera: abruptam credas radicibus ire
Ortygiam aut fractum pelago decurrere montem.
ast ubi suspensis siluerunt aequora tonsis, 340
mitior et senibus cyncis et pectine Phoebi
uox media de puppe uenit, maria ipsa carinae
accedunt. post nosse datum est: Oeagrius illic
adclinis malo mediis intersonat Orpheus
remigiis tantosque iubet nescire labores. 345
illis in Scythicum Borean iter oraue primi
Cyaneis artata maris. nos, Thracia uisu
bella ratae, uario tecta incursare tumultu,
densarum pecudum aut fugientum more uolucrum.
heu ubi nunc Furiae? portus amplexaque litus 350
moenia, qua longe pelago despectus aperto,
scandimus et celsas turres; huc saxa sudesque
armaque maesta uirum atque infectos caedibus enses
subuectant trepidae; quin et squalentia texta
thoracum et uultu galeas intrare soluto 355
non pudet; audaces rubuit mirata cateruas
Pallas, et auerso risit Gradius in Haemo.
tunc primum ex animis praeceps amentia cessit,
nec ratis illa salo, sed diuum sera per aequor
iustitia et poenae scelerum aduentare uidentur. 360
iamque aberant terris quantum Gortynia currunt
spicula, caeruleo grauidam cum Iuppiter imbri
ipsa super nubem ratis armamenta Pelasgae
sistit agens; inde horror aquis, et raptus ab omni
sole dies miscet tenebras, quis protinus unda 365
concolor; obnixa lacerant caua nubila uenti
diripiuntque fretum, nigris redit umida tellus

uerticibus, totumque Notis certantibus aequor
pendet et arquato iam iam prope sidera dorso
frangitur; incertae nec iam prior impetus alno, 370
sed labat extantem rostris modo gurgite in imo,
nunc caelo Tritona ferens. nec robora prosunt
semideum heroum, puppemque insana flagellat
arbor et instabili procumbens pondere curuas
raptat aquas, remique cadunt in pectus inanes. 375
nos quoque per rupes murorumque aggere ab omni,
dum labor ille uiris fretaque indignantur et Austros,
desuper inualidis fluitantia tela lacertis
(quid non ausa manus?) Telamona et Pelea contra
spargimus, et nostro petitur Tirynthius arcu. 380
illi (quippe simul bello pelagoque laborant),
pars clipeis munire ratem, pars aequora fundo
egerere; ast alii pugnant, sed inertia motu
corpora, suspensaeque carent conamine uires.
instamus iactu telorum, et ferrea nimbis 385
certat hiems, ustaeque sudes fractique molares
spiculaque et multa crinitum missile flamma
nunc pelago, nunc puppe cadunt; dat operata fragorem
pinus et ab iunctis regemunt tabulata cauernis.
talis Hyperborea uirides niue uerberat agros 390
Iuppiter; obruitur campis genus omne ferarum,
deprensaeque cadunt uolucres, et messis amaro
strata gelu, fragor inde iugis, inde omnibus irae.
ut uero elisit nubes Ioue tortus ab alto
ignis et ingentes patuere in fulmine nautae, 395
deriguere animi, manibusque horrore remissis
arma aliena cadunt, rediit in pectora sexus.
cernimus Aeacidas murisque inmane minantem
Ancaeam et longa pellentem cuspide rupes
Iphiton; attonito manifestus in agmine supra est 400
Amphitryoniades puppemque alternus utrimque
ingrauat et medias ardet descendere in undas.
at leuis et miserae nondum mihi notus Iason
transtra per et remos impressaque terga uirorum

nunc magnum Oeniden, nunc ille hortatibus Idan 405
et Talaum et cana rorantem aspergine ponti
Tyndariden iterans gelidique in nube parentis
uela laborantem Calain subnectere malo
uoce manuque rogat; quatiunt impulsibus illi
nunc freta, nunc muros, sed nec spumantia cedunt 410
aequora, et incussae redeunt a turribus hastae.
ipse graues fluctus clauumque audire negantem
lassat agens Tiphys palletque et plurima mutat
imperia ac laeuas dextrasque obtorquet in undas
proram nauifragis auidam concurrere saxis, 415
donec ab extremae cuneo ratis Aesone natus
Palladios oleae, Mopsi gestamina, ramos
extulit et, socium turba prohibente, poposcit
foedera; praecipites uocem inuoluere procellae.
tunc modus armorum, pariterque exhausta quierant 420
flamina, confusoque dies respexit Olympo.
quingenta illi, trabibus de more reuinctis,
eminus abrupto quatiunt noua litora saltu,
magnorum decora alta patrum, iam fronte sereni
noscendique habitu, postquam timor iraque cessit 425
uultibus. arcana sic fama erumpere porta
caelicolas, si quando domos litusque rubentum
Aethiopum et mensas amor est intrare minores;
dant fluuii montesque locum, tum terra superbit
gressibus et paulum respirat caelifer Atlans. 430
hic et ab adserto nuper Marathone superbum
Thesea et Ismarios, Aquilonia pignora, fratres,
utraque quis rutila stridebant tempora penna,
cernimus, hic Phoebos non indignante priorem
Admetum et durae similem nihil Orphea Thracae, 435
tunc prolem Calydone satam generumque profundi
Nereos. ambiguo uisus errore lacesunt
Oebalidae gemini; chlamys huic, chlamys ardet et illi,
ambo hostile gerunt, umeros exertus uterque,
nudus uterque genas, simili coma fulgurat astro. 440
audet iter magnique sequens uestigia mutat

Herculis et tarda quamuis se mole ferentem
uix cursu tener aequat Hylas Lernaeaque tollens
arma sub ingenti gaudet sudare pharetra.

ergo iterum Venus et tacitis corda aspera flammis 445
Lemniadum pertemptat Amor. tunc regia Iuno
arma habitusque uirum pulchraeque insignia gentis
mentibus insinuat, certatimque ordine cunctae
hospitibus patuere fores; tunc primus in aris
ignis, et infandis uenere obliuia curis; 450
tunc epulae felixque sopor noctesque quietae,
nec superum sine mente, reor, placuere fatentes.
forsitan et nostrae fatum excusabile culpae
noscere cura, duces. cineres furiasque meorum
testor ut externas non sponte aut crimine taedas 455
attigerim (scit cura deum), etsi blandus Iason
uirginibus dare uincla nouis: sua iura cruentum
Phasin habent, alios, Colchi, generatis amores.
iamque exuta gelu tepuerunt sidera longis
solibus, et uelox in terga reuoluitur annus. 460
iam noua progenies partusque in uota soluti,
et non speratis clamatur Lemnos alumnis.
nec non ipsa tamen, thalami monimenta coacti,
enitor geminos, duroque sub hospite mater
nomen aui renouo; nec quae fortuna relictis 465
nosse datur: iam plena quater quinquennia degunt
si modo fata sinunt aluitque rogata Lycaste.

detumuere animi maris, et clementior Auster
uela uocat: ratis ipsa moram portusque quietos
odit et aduersi tendit retinacula saxi. 470
inde fugam Minyae, sociosque appellat Iason
efferus, o utinam iam tunc mea litora rectis
praeteruectus aquis, cui non sua pignora cordi,
non promissa fides; certe stat fama remotis
gentibus: aequorei redierunt uellera Phrixi. 475
ut stata lux pelago uenturumque aethera sensit
Tiphys et occidui rubuere cubilia Phoebi,
heu iterum gemitus, iterumque nouissima nox est.

uix reserata dies, et iam rate celsus Iason
ire iubet, primoque ferit dux uerbere pontum. 480
illos e scopulis et summo uertice montis
spumea porrecti dirimentes terga profundi
prosequimur uisu, donec lassauit euntes
lux oculos longumque polo contexere uisa est
aequor et extremi pressit freta margine caeli. 485

fama subit portus uectum trans alta Thoanta
fraterna regnare Chio, mihi crimina nulla
et uacuos arsisse rogos. fremit impia plebes
sontibus accensae stimulis facinusque reposcunt.
quin etiam occultae uulgo increbrescere uoces: 490
“solane fida suis, nos autem in funera laetae?
non deus haec fatumque? quid imperat urbe nefanda?”
talibus exanimis dictis (et triste propinquat
supplicium, nec regna iuuant) uaga litora furtim
incomitata sequor funestaque moenia linquo, 495
qua fuga nota patris. sed non iterum obuius Euan,
nam me praedonum manus huc appulsa tacentem
abripit et uestras famulam transmittit in oras.’

taliam Lernaëis iterat dum regibus exul
Lemnias et longa solatur damna querela 500
inmemor absentis (sic di suasistis!) alumni,
ille graues oculos languentiaque ora comanti
mergit humo fessusque diu puerilibus actis
labitur in somnos, presa manus haeret in herba.

interea campis, nemoris sacer horror Achaei, 505
terrigena exoritur serpens tractuque soluto
inmanem sese uehit ac post terga relinquit.
liuida fax oculis, tumidi stat in ore ueneni
spuma uirens, ter lingua uibrat, terna agmina adunci
dentis, et auratae crudelis gloria fronti 510
prominet. Inachio sanctum dixere Tonanti
agricolae, cui cura loci et siluestribus aris
pauper honos; nunc ille dei circumdare templa
orbe uago labens, miserae nunc robora siluae
atterit et uastas tenuat complexibus ornos; 515

saepe super fluuios geminae iacet aggere ripae
continuus, squamisque incisus adaestuat amnis.
sed nunc, Ogygii iussis quando omnis anhelat
terra dei trepidaeque latent in puluere Nymphae,
saeuior anfractu laterum sinuosa retorquens 520
terga solo siccique nocens furit igne ueneni.
stagna per arentesque lacus fontesque repressos
uoluitur et uacuis fluuiorum in uallibus errat,
incertusque sui liquidum nunc aera lambit
ore supinato, nunc arua gementia radens 525
pronus adhaeret humo, si quid uiridantia sudent
gramina; percussae calidis adflatibus herbae,
qua tulit ora, cadunt, moriturque ad sibila campus:
quantus ab Arctois discriminat aethera Plaustis
Anguis et usque Notos alienumque exit in orbem; 530
quantus et ille sacri spiris intorta mouebat
cornua Parnasi, donec tibi, Delie, fixus
uexit harundineam centeno uulnere siluam.

quis tibi, parue, deus tam magni pondera fati
sorte dedit? tune hoc uix prima ad limina uitae 535
hoste iaces? an ut inde sacer per saecula Grais
gentibus et tanto dignus morerere sepulcro?
occidis extremae destrictus uerbere caudae
ignaro serpente puer, fugit ilicet artus
somnus, et in solam patuerunt lumina mortem. 540
cum tamen attonito moriens uagitus in auras
excidit et ruptis inmutuit ore querelis,
qualia non totas peragunt insomnia uoces,
audiit Hypsipyle, facilemque negantia cursum
exanimis genua aegra rapit; iam certa malorum 545
mentis ab augurio sparsoque per omnia uisu
lustrat humum quaerens et nota uocabula paruo
nequiquam ingeminans: nusquam ille, et prata recentes
amisere notas. uiridi piger accubat hostis
collectus gyro spatiosaque iugera complet 550
sic etiam, obliqua ceruicem expositus in aluo.
horruit infelix uisu longoque profundum

incendit clamore nemus; nec territus ille,
sed iacet. Argolicas ululatus flebilis aures
impulit; extemplo monitu ducis aduolat ardens 555
Arcas eques causamque refert. tunc squamea demum
toruus ad armorum radios fremitumque uirorum
colla mouet: rapit ingenti conamine saxum,
quo discretus ager, uacuasque impellit in auras
arduus Hippomedon, quo turbine bellica quondam 560
librati saliunt portarum in claustra molares.
cassa ducis uirtus: iam mollia colla refusus
in tergum serpens uenientem exhausterat ictum.
dat sonitum tellus, nemorumque per auia densi
dissultant nexus. 'at non mea uulnera,' clamat 565
et trabe fraxinea Capaneus subit obuius, 'umquam
effugies, seu tu pauidi ferus incola luci,
siue deis, utinamque deis, concessa uoluptas,
non, si consertum super haec mihi membra Giganta
subueheres.' uolat hasta tremens et hiantia monstri 570
ora subit linguaeque secat fera uincla trisulcae,
perque iubas stantes capitisque insigne corusci
emicat, et nigri sanie perfusa cerebri
figitur alta solo. longus uix tota peregit
membra dolor, rapido celer ille uolumine telum 575
circumit auulsumque ferens in opaca refugit
templa dei; hic magno tellurem pondere mensus
implorantem animam dominis adsibilat aris.
illum et cognatae stagna indignantia Lernae,
floribus et uernis adsuetae spargere Nymphae, 580
et Nemees reptatus ager, lucosque per omnes
siluicolae fracta genuistis harundine Fauni.
ipse etiam e summa iam tela poposcerat aethra
Iuppiter, et dudum nimbiue hiemesque coibant,
ni minor ira deo grauioraque tela mereri 585
seruatus Capaneus; moti tamen aura cucurrit
fulminis et summas libauit uertice cristas.

iamque pererratis infelix Lemnia campis,
liber ut angue locus, modico super aggere longe

pallida sanguineis infectas roribus herbas 590
prospicit. huc magno cursum rapit effera luctu
agnoscitque nefas, terraeque inlisa nocenti
funeris in morem non uerba in fulmine primo,
non lacrimas habet: ingeminat misera oscula tantum
incumbens animaeque fugam per membra tepentem 595
quaerit hians. non ora loco, non pectora restant,
rapta cutis, tenuia ossa patent nexusque madentes
sanguinis imbre noui, totumque in uulnere corpus.
ac uelut aligerae sedem fetusque parentis
cum piger umbrosa populatus in ilice serpens, 600
illa redit querulaeque domus mirata quietem
iam stupet impendens aduectosque horrida maesto
excudit ore cibos, cum solus in arbore paret
sanguis et errantes per capta cubilia plumae.

ut laceros artus gremio miseranda recepit 605
intexitque comis, tandem laxata dolori
uox inuenit iter, gemitusque in uerba soluti:
‘o mihi desertae natorum dulcis imago,
Archemore, o rerum et patriae solamen ademptae
seruitiique decus, qui te, mea gaudia, sontes 610
extinxere dei, modo quem digressa reliqui
lasciuum et pronò uexantem gramina cursu?
heu ubi siderei uultus? ubi uerba ligatis
imperfecta sonis risusque et murmura soli
intellecta mihi? quotiens tibi Lemnon et Argo 615
sueta loqui et longa somnum suadere querela!
sic equidem luctus solabar et ubera paruo
iam materna dabam, cui nunc uenit inritus orbae
lactis et infelix in uulnera liquitur imber.
nosco deos: o dura mei praesagia somni 620
nocturnique metus, et numquam impune per umbras
attonitae mihi uisa Venus! quos arguo diuos?
ipsa ego te (quid enim timeam moritura fateri?)
exposui fatis. quae mentem insania traxit?
tantane me tantae tenuere obliuia curae? 625
dum patrios casus famaeque exorsa retracto

ambitiosa meae (pietas haec magna fidesque!),
exsolui tibi, Lemne, nefas; ubi letifer anguis,
ferre, duces, meriti si qua est mihi gratia duri,
si quis honos dictis, aut uos extinguite ferro, 630
ne tristes dominos orbamque inimica reuisam
Eurydicen, quamquam haud illi mea cura dolendo
cesserit. hocne ferens onus inlaetabile matris
transfundam gremio? quae++me prius ima sub umbras
mergat humus!' simul haec terraque et sanguine uultum 635
sordida magnorum circa uestigia regum
uertitur et tacite maerentibus imputat undas.

et iam sacrifici subitus per tecta Lycurgi
nuntius implerat lacrimis ipsumque domumque,
ipsum aduentantem Persei uertice sancto 640
montis, ubi auerso dederat prosecta Tonanti,
et caput iratis rediens quassabat ab extis.
hic sese Argolicis immunem seruat ab armis,
haud animi uacuuus, sed templa araeque tenebant.
necdum etiam responsa deum monitusque uetusti 645
exciderant uoxque ex adytis accepta profundis:
'prima, Lycurge, dabis Dircae funera bello.'
id cauet, et maestus uicini puluere Martis
angitur ad lituos periturisque inuidet armis.

ecce (fides superum!) laceras comitata Thoantis 650
aduehit exequias, contra subit obuia mater,
femineos coetus plangentiaque agmina ducens.
at non magnanimo pietas ignaua Lycurgo:
fortior ille malis, lacrimasque insana resorbet
ira patris, longo rapit arua morantia passu 655
uociferans: 'illa autem ubinam, cui parua cruoris
laetaue damna mei? uiuitne? impellite raptam,
ferre citi comites; faxo omnis fabula Lemni
et pater et tumidae generis mendacia sacri
exciderint.' ibat letumque inferre parabat 660
ense furens raptu; uenienti Oeneius heros
impiger obiecta proturbat pectora parma,
ac simul infrendens: 'siste hunc, uesane, furorem,

quisquis es!’ et pariter Capaneus acerque reducto
adfuit Hippomedon rectoque Erymanthius ense, 665
ac iuuenem multo praestringunt lumine; at inde
agrestum pro rege manus. quos inter Adrastus
mitius et sociae ueritus commercia uitae
Amphiaraus ait, ‘ne, quaeso! absistite ferro,
unus auum sanguis, neue indulgete furori, 670
tuque prior.’ sed non sedato pectore Tydeus
subicit: ‘anne ducem seruatricemque cohortis
Inachiae ingratis coram tot milibus audes
mactare in tumulos (quanti pro funeris ultor!),
cui regnum genitorque Thoas et lucidus Euan 675
stirpis auus? timidone parum, quod gentibus actis
undique in arma tuis inter rapida agmina pacem
solus habes? habeasque, et te uictoria Graium
inueniat tumulis etiamnum haec fata gementem.’

dixerat, et tandem cunctante modestior ira 680
ille refert: ‘equidem non uos ad moenia Thebes
rebar et hostiles huc aduenisse cateruas.
pergite in excidium socii, si tanta uoluptas,
sanguinis, imbuite arma domi, atque haec inrita dudum
templa Iouis (quid enim haud licitum?) ferat impius ignis, 685
si uilem, tanti premerent cum pectora luctus,
in famulam ius esse ratus dominoque ducique.
sed uidet haec, uidet ille deum regnator, et ausis,
sera quidem, manet ira tamen.’ sic fatus, et arces
respicit. atque illic alio certamine belli 690
tectata fremunt; uolucres equitum praeuerterat alas
Fama recens, geminos alis amplexa tumultus:
illi ad fata rapi atque illi iam occumbere leto,
sic meritam, Hypsipylum iterant, creduntque nec irae
fit mora, iamque faces et tela penatibus instant, 695
uertere regna fremunt raptumque auferre Lycurgum
cum Ioue cumque aris; resonant ululatibus aedes
femineis, uersusque dolor dat terga timori.

alipedum curru sed enim sublimis Adrastus
secum ante ora uirum fremibunda Thoantida portans 700

it medius turmis et, 'parcite, parcite!' clamat,
'nil actum saeue, meritus nec tale Lycurgus
excidium, gratique inuentrix fluminis ecce.'
sic ubi diuersis maria euertere procellis
hinc Boreas Eurisque, illinc niger imbribus Auster, 705
pulsa dies regnantque hiemes, uenit aequoris alti
rex sublimis equis, geminusque ad spumea Triton
frena natans late pelago dat signa cadenti,
et iam plana Thetis, montesque et litora crescunt.

quis superum tanto solatus funera uoto 710
pensauit lacrimas inopinaque gaudia maestae
rettulit Hypsipylae? tu gentis conditor, Euhan,
qui geminos iuuenes Lemni de litore uectos
intuleras Nemeae mirandaque fata parabas.
causa uiae genetrix, nec inhospita tecta Lycurgi 715
praebuerant aditus, et protinus ille tyranno
nuntius extinctae miserando uulnere prolis.
ergo adsunt comites (pro fors et caeca futuri
mens hominum!) regique fauent; sed Lemnos ad aures
ut primum dictusque Thoas, per tela manusque 720
inruerant, matremque audis complexibus ambo
diripiunt flentes alternaque pectora mutant.
illa uelut rupes inmoto saxea uisu
haeret et expertis non audet credere diuis.
ut uero et uultus et signa Argoa relictis 725
ensibus atque umeris amborum intextus Iason,
cesserunt luctus, turbataque munere tanto
corrui, atque alio maduerunt lumina fletu.
addita signa polo, laetoque ululante tumultu
tergaque et aera dei motas crepuere per auras. 730
tunc pius Oeclides, ut prima silentia uulgi
mollior ira dedit, placidasque accessus ad aures:
'audite, o ductor Nemeae lectique potentes
Inachidae, quae certus agi manifestat Apollo.
iste quidem Argolicis haud olim indebitus armis 735
luctus adest, recto descendunt limite Parcae:
et sitis interitu fluuiorum et letifer anguis

et puer, heu nostri signatus nomine fati,
Archemorus, cuncta haec superum demissa suprema
mente fluunt. differte animos festinaque tela 740
ponite; mansuris donandus honoribus infans.
et meruit; det pulchra suis libamina Virtus
manibus, atque utinam plures innectere pergas,
Phoebe, moras, semperque nouis bellare uetemur
casibus, et semper Thebe funesta recedat. 745
at uos magnorum transgressi fata parentum
felices, longum quibus hinc per saecula nomen,
dum Lernaea palus et dum pater Inachus ibit,
dum Nemea tremulas campis iaculabitur umbras,
ne fletu uiolate sacrum, ne plangite diuos: 750
nam deus iste, deus, Pyliae nec fata senectae
maluerit, Phrygiis aut degere longius annis.’
finierat, caeloque cauam nox induit umbram.

Liber Sextus

Nuntia multiuago Danaas perlabitur urbes
Fama gradu, sancire nouo sollemnia busto
Inachidas ludumque super, quo Martia bellis
praesudare paret seseque accendere uirtus.
Graium ex more decus: primus Pisaea per arua 5
hunc pius Alcides Pelopi certauit honorem
puluereumque fera crinem deterisit oliua;
proxima uipereo celebratur libera nexu
Phocis, Apollineae bellum puerile pharetrae;
mox circum tristes seruata Palaemonis aras 10
nigra superstitio, quotiens animosa resumit
Leucothea gemitus et amica ad litora festa
tempestate uenit: planctu conclamat uterque
Isthmos, Echioniae responsant flebile Thebae.
et nunc eximii regum, quibus Argos alumnis 15
conexum caelo, quorumque ingentia tellus
Aonis et Tyriae suspirant nomina matres,
concurrunt nudasque mouent in proelia uires.
ceu primum ausurae trans alta ignota biremes,
seu Tyrrhenam hiemem, seu stagna Aegaea lacesant, 20
tranquillo prius arma lacu clauumque leuesque
explorant remos atque ipsa pericula discunt;
at cum experta cohors, tunc pontum inrumpere fretae
longius ereptasque oculis non quaerere terras.

clara laboriferos caelo Tithonia currus 25
extulerat uigilesque deae pallentis habenas
et Nox et cornu fugiebat Somnus inani;
iam plangore uiae, gemitu iam regia mugit
flebilis, acceptos longe nemora auia frangunt
multiplicantque sonos. sedet ipse exutus honoro 30
uittarum nexu genitor squalentiaque ora
sparsus et incultam ferali puluere barbam.
asperior contra planctusque egressa uiriles
exemplo famulas premit hortaturque uolentes

orba parens, lacerasque super procumbere nati 35
reliquias ardet totiensque auulsa refertur.
arcet et ipse pater. mox ut maerentia dignis
uultibus Inachii penetrarunt limina reges,
ceu noua tunc clades et primo saucius infans
uulnere letalisue inrumperet atria serpens, 40
sic alium ex alio quamquam lassata fragorem
pectora congeminant, integratoque resultant
accensae clamore fores: sensere Pelasgi
inuidiam et lacrimis excusant crimen obortis.
ipse, datum quotiens intercisoque tumultu 45
conticuit stupefacta domus, solatur Adrastus
adloquiis genitorem ultro, nunc fata recensens
resque hominum duras et inexorabile pensum,
nunc aliam prolem mansuraque numine dextro
pignora. nondum orsis modus, et lamenta redibant. 50
ille quoque adfatus non mollius audit amicos
quam trucidis Ionii rabies clamantia ponto
uota uirum aut tenues curant uaga fulmina nimbos.
tristibus interea ramis teneraque cupresso
damnatus flammae torus et puerile feretrum 55
textitur: ima uirent agresti stramina cultu;
proxima gramineis operosior area sertis,
et picturatus morituris floribus agger;
tertius adsurgens Arabum strue tollitur ordo
Eoas complexus opes incanaque glebis 60
tura et ab antiquo durantia cinnama Belo.
summa crepant auro, Tyrioque attollitur ostro
molle supercilium, teretes hoc undique gemmae
inradiant, medio Linus intertextus acantho
letiferique canes: opus admirabile semper 65
oderat atque oculos flectebat ab omine mater.
arma etiam et ueterum exuuias circumdat auorum
gloria mixta malis adflictaeque ambitus aulae,
ceu grande exequiis onus atque immensa ferantur
membra rogo, sed cassa tamen sterilisque dolentes 70
fama iuuat, paruique augescunt funere manes.

inde ingens lacrimis honor et miseranda uoluptas,
muneraque in cineres annis grauiora feruntur;
namque illi et pharetras breuioraque tela dicarat
festinus uoti pater insontesque sagittas; 75
iam tunc et nota stabuli de gente probatos
in nomen pascebat equos cinctusque sonantes
armaque maiores expectatura lacertos.
[spes auidi quas, non in nomen credula, uestes
urguebat studio cultusque insignia regni 80
purpureos sceptrumque minus, cuncta ignibus atris
damnat atrox suaque ipse parens gestamina ferri,
si damnis rabidum queat exaturare dolorem.]

parte alia gnari monitis exercitus instat
auguris aeriam truncis nemorumque ruina, 85
montis opus, cumulare pyram, quae crimina caesi
anguis et infausti cremet atra piacula belli.
[his labor accisam Nemeen umbrosaue tempe
praecipitare solo lucosque ostendere Phoebo.]
sternitur extemplo ueteres incaedua ferro 90
silua comas, largae qua non opulentior umbrae
Argolicos inter saltusque educta Lycaeos
extulerat super astra caput: stat sacra senectae
numine, nec solos hominum transgressa ueterno
fertur auos, Nymphas etiam mutasse superstes 95
Faunorumque greges. aderat miserabile luco
excidium: fugere ferae, nidosque tepentes
absiliunt (metus urguet) aues; cadit ardua fagus
Chaoniumque nemus brumaeque inlaesa cupressus,
procumbunt piceae, flammis alimenta supremis, 100
ornique iliceaeque trabes metuendaque suco
taxus et infandos belli potura cruores
fraxinus atque situ non expugnabile robur.
hinc audax abies et odoro uulnere pinus
scinditur, adclinant intonsa cacumina terrae 105
alnus amica fretis nec inhospita uitibus ulmus.
dat gemitum tellus: non sic euersa feruntur
Ismara cum fracto Boreas caput extulit antro,

non grassante Noto citius nocturna peregit
flamma nemus. linquunt flentes dilecta locorum 110
otia cana Pales Siluanusque arbiter umbrae
semideumque pecus, migrantibus aggemit illis
silua, nec amplexae dimittunt robora Nymphae.
ut cum possessas auidis uictoribus arces
dux raptare dedit, uix signa audita, nec urbem 115
inuenias; ducunt sternuntque abiguntque feruntque
inmodici, minor ille fragor quo bella gerebant.

iamque pari cumulo geminas, hanc tristibus umbris
ast illam superis, aequus labor auxerat aras,
cum signum luctus cornu graue mugit adunco 120
tibia, cui teneros suetum producere manes
lege Phrygum maesta. Pelopem monstrasse ferebant
exequiale sacrum carmenque minoribus umbris
utile, quo geminis Niobe consumpta pharetris
squalida bisseas Sipylon deduxerat urnas. 125

portant inferias arsuraque fercula primi
Graiorum, titulisque pios testantur honores
gentis quisque suae; longo post tempore surgit
colla super iuuenum (numero dux legerat omni)
ipse fero clamore torus. cinxere Lycurgum 130
Lernaei proceres, genetricem mollior ambit
turba; nec Hypsipyle raro subit agmine: uallant
Inachidae memores, sustentant liuida nati
bracchia et inuentae concedunt plangere matri.

illic infaustos ut primum egressa penates 135
Eurydice, nudo uocem de pectore rumpit
planctuque et longis praefata ululatibus inquit:
‘non hoc Argolidum coetu circumdata matrum
speraui te, nate, sequi, nec talia demens
fingebar uotis annorum elementa tuorum, 140
nil saeuum reputans: etenim his in finibus aeui
unde ego bella tibi Thebasque ignara timerem?
cui superum nostro committere sanguine pugnas
dulce? quis hoc armis uouit scelus? at tua nondum,
Cadme, domus, nullus Tyrio grege plangitur infans. 145

primitias egomet lacrimarum et caedis acerbae,
 ante tubas ferrumque, tuli, dum deside cura
 credo sinus fidos altricis et ubera mando.
 quidni ego? narrabat seruatum fraude parentem
 insontesque manus. en quam feralē putemus 150
 abiurasse sacrum et Lemni gentilibus unam
 immunem furiis! haec illa (et creditis ausae?)
 haec pietate potens solis abiecit in aruis++
 non regem dominumque++alienos impia partus,
 hoc tantum, siluaque infamis tramite liquit 155
 quem non anguis atrox (quid enim hac opus, ei mihi, leti
 mole fuit?) tantum caeli uiolentior aura
 impulsaeque Noto frondes cassusque ualeret
 exanimare timor. nec uos incessere luctu
 orba habeo, fixum matri inmotumque manebat 160
 hac altrice nefas; ~atquin et blandus ad illam
 nate magis solam nosse atque audire uocantem
 ignarusque mei~ nulla ex te gaudia matri.
 illa tuos questus lacrimososque impia risus
 audiit et uocis decerpsit murmura primae. 165
 illa tibi genetrix semper dum uita manebat,
 nunc ego. sed miserae mihi nec punire potestas
 sic meritam! quid dona, duces, quid inania fertis
 iusta rogis? illam (nil poscunt amplius umbrae),
 illam, oro, cineri simul excisaeque parenti 170
 reddite, quaeso, duces, per ego haec primordia belli
 cui peperī; sic aequa gemant mihi funera matres
 Ogygiae.' sternit crines iteratque precando:
 'reddite, nec uero crudelem auidamque uocate
 sanguinis: occumbam pariter, dum uulnere iusto 175
 exaturata oculos unum impellamur in ignem.'
 talia uociferans alia de parte gementem
 Hypsipylon (neque enim illa comas nec pectora seruat)
 agnouit longe et socium indignata dolorem:
 'hoc saltem, o proceres, tuque o, cui pignora nostri 180
 proturbata tori: prohibete, auferte supremis
 inuisam exequiis. quid se funesta parenti

miscet et in nostris spectatur et ipsa ruinis?’
[cui luget complexa suos?’ dixitque repente
concidit abruptisque obmutuit ore querelis.] 185
sic ait abruptisque inmutuit ore querelis. 185b
non secus ac primo fraudatum lacte iuuentum,
cui trepidae uires et solus ab ubere sanguis,
seu fera seu duras auexit pastor ad aras;
nunc uallem spoliata parens, nunc flumina questu,
nunc armenta mouet uacuosque interrogat agros; 190
tunc piget ire domum, maestoque nouissima campo
exit et oppositas impasta auertitur herbas.

at genitor sceptrique decus cultusque Tonantis
inicit ipse rogis, tergoque et pectore fusam
caesariem ferro minuit sectisque iacentis 195
obnubit tenuia ora comis, ac talia fletu
uerba pio miscens: ‘alio tibi, perfide, pacto,
Iuppiter, hunc crinem uoti reus ante dicaram,
si pariter uirides nati libare dedisses
ad tua templa genas; sed non ratus ore sacerdos, 200
damnataeque preces; ferat haec, quae dignior, umbra.’
iam face subiecta primis in frondibus ignis
exclamat; labor insanos arcere parentes.
stant iussi Danaum atque obtentis eminus armis
prospectu uisus intercludere nefasto. 205
ditantur flammae; non umquam opulentior illic
ante cinis: crepitant gemmae, atque inmane liquescit
argentum, et pictis exsudat uestibus aurum;
nec non Assyriis pinguescunt robora sucis,
pallentique croco strident ardentia mella, 210
spumantesque mero paterae uerguntur et atri
sanguinis et rapto gratissima cymbia lactis.
tunc septem numero turmas (centenus ubique
surgit eques) uersis ducunt insignibus ipsi
Graiugenae reges, lustrantque ex more sinistro 215
orbe rogam et stantes inclinant puluere flammas.
ter curuos egere sinus, inlisaque telis
tela sonant, quater horrendum pepulere fragorem

arma, quater mollem famularum bracchia planctum.

semianimas alter pecudes spirantiaque ignis 220
accipit armenta; hic luctus abolere nouique
funeris auspicium uates, quamquam omina sentit
uera, iubet: dextri gyro et uibrantibus hastis
hac redeunt, raptumque suis libamen ab armis
quisque iacit, seu frena libet seu cingula flammis 225
mergere seu iaculum summae seu cassidis umbram.
[multa gemunt extra raucis concentibus agri,
et lituis aures circum pulsantur acutis.
terretur clamore nemus: sic Martia uellunt
signa tubae, nondum ira calet, nec sanguine ferrum 230
inrubit, primus bellorum comitur illo
uultus, honoris opus. stat adhuc incertus in alta
nube quibus sese Mauors indulgeat armis.]

finis erat, lassusque putres iam Mulciber ibat
in cineres; instant flammis multoque soporant 235
imbre rogam, posito donec cum sole labores
exhausti; seris uix cessit cura tenebris.

roscida iam nouies caelo dimiserat astra
Lucifer et totidem Lunae praeuenerat ignes
mutato nocturnus equo (nec conscia fallit 240
sidera et alterno deprenditur unus in ortu):
mirum opus accelerasse manus! stat saxea moles,
templum ingens cineri, rerumque effectus in illa
ordo docet casus: fessis hic flumina monstrat
Hypsipyle Danaïs, hic reptat flebilis infans, 245
hic iacet, extremum tumuli circum asperat orbem
squameus; expectes morientis ab ore cruenta
sibila, marmorea sic uoluitur anguis in hasta.

iamque audidum pugnas uisendi uulgu inermes
(fama uocat cunctos) aruis ac moenibus adsunt 250
exciti; illi etiam quis belli incognitus horror,
quos effeta domi, quos prima reliquerat aetas,
conueniunt: non aut Ephyraeo in litore tanta
umquam aut Oenomai fremuerunt agmina circo.

collibus incuruis uiridique obsessa corona 255

uallis in amplexu nemorum sedet; hispida circum
stant iuga, et obiectus geminis umbonibus agger
campum exire uetat, longo quem tramite planum
gramineae frontes sinuataque caespite uiuo
mollia non subitis augent fastigia cliuis. 260

illic conferti, iam sole rubentibus aruis,
bellatrix sedere cohors; ibi corpore mixto
metiri numerum uultusque habitusque suorum
dulce uiris, tantique iuuat fiducia belli.
centum ibi nigrantes, armenti robora, tauros 265
lenta mole trahunt; idem numerusque colorque
matribus et nondum lunatis fronte iuuencis.

exin magnanimum series antiqua parentum
inuehitur, miris in uultum animata figuris.
primus anhelantem duro Tirynthius angens 270
pectoris attritu sua frangit in ossa leonem.
haud illum impauidi quamuis et in aere suumque
Inachidae uidere decus. pater ordine iuncto
laeus harundineae recubans super aggere ripae
cernitur emissaeque indulgens Inachus urnae. 275
Io post tergum, iam prona dolorque parentis,
spectat inocciduis stellatum uisibus Argum.
ast illam melior Phariis erexerat aruis
Iuppiter atque hospes iam tunc Aurora colebat.
Tantalus inde parens, non qui fallentibus undis 280
inminet aut refugae sterilem rapit aera siluae,
sed pius et magni uehitur conuiua Tonantis.
parte alia uictor curru Neptunia tendit
lora Pelops, prensatque rotas auriga natantes
Myrtilos et uolucris iam iamque relinquitur axe. 285
et grauis Acrisius speciesque horrenda Coroebi
et Danae culpata sinus et in amne reperto
tristis Amyclone, paruoque Alcmena superbit
Hercule tergemina crinem circumdata luna.
iungunt discordes inimica in foedera dextras 290
Belidae fratres, sed uultu mitior astat
Aegyptus; Danaï manifestum agnoscere ficto

ore notas pacisque malae noctisque futurae.
mille dehinc species. tandem satiata uoluptas
praestantesque uiros uocat ad sua praemia uirtus. 295

primus sudor equis. dic incluta, Phoebe, regentum
nomina, dic ipsos; neque enim generosior umquam
alipedum conlata acies, ceu praepete cursu
confligant densae uolucres aut litore in uno
Aeolus insanis statuatur certamina uentis. 300

ducitur ante omnes rutilae manifestus Arion
igne iubae. Neptunus equo, si certa priorum
fama, pater; primus teneri laesisse lupatis
ora et litoreo domitasse in puluere fertur,
uerberibus parcens; etenim insatiatus eundi 305
ardor et hiberno par inconstantia ponto.
saepe per Ionium Libycumque natantibus ire
interiunctus equis omnesque adsuerat in oras
caeruleum deferre patrem; stupuere relictas
Nubila, certantesque Eurique Notique sequuntur. 310

nec minor in terris bella Eurysthea gerentem
Amphitryoniaden alto per gramina sulco
duxerat, illi etiam ferus indocilisque teneri.
mox diuum dono regis dignatus Adrasti
imperia et multum mediis mansueuerat annis. 315

tunc rector genero Polynici indulget agendum
multa monens, ubi feruor equo, qua suetus ab arte
mulceri, ne saeua manus, ne liber habenis
impetus. 'urgue alios,' inquit, 'stimulisque minisque;
ille ibit, minus ipse uoles.' sic ignea lora 320

cum daret et rapido Sol natum imponeret axi,
gaudentem lacrimans astra insidiosa docebat
nolentesque teri zonas mediamque polorum
temperiem: pius ille quidem et formidine cauta,
sed iuuenem durae prohibebant discere Parcae. 325

Oebalios sublimis agit, spes proxima palmae,
Amphiarus equos; tua furto lapsa propago,
Cyllare, dum Scythici diuersus ad ostia Ponti
Castor Amyclaeas remo permutat habenas.

ipse habitu niueus, niuei dant colla iugales, 330
 concolor est albis et cassis et infula cristis.
 quin et Thessalicis felix Admetus ab oris
 uix steriles compescit equas, Centaurica dicunt
 semina: credo, adeo sexum indignantur, et omnis
 in uires adducta Venus; noctemque diemque 335
 adsimulant maculis internigrantibus albae:
 tantus uterque color, credi nec degener illo
 de grege, Castaliae stupuit qui sibila cannae
 laetus et audito contempsit Apolline pasci.
 ecce et Iasonidae iuuenes, noua gloria matris 340
 Hypsipyles, subiere iugo, quo uectus uterque,
 nomen auo gentile Thoas atque omine dictus
 Euneos Argoo. geminis eadem omnia: uultus,
 currus, equi, uestes, par et concordia uoti,
 uincere uel solo cupiunt a fratre relinqui. 345
 it Chromis Hippodamusque, alter satus Hercule magno,
 alter ab Oenomao: dubites uter effera presset
 frena magis. Getici pecus hic Diomedis, at ille
 Pisaei iuga patris habet, crudelibus ambo
 exuuiis diroque imbuti sanguine currus. 350
 metarum instar erat hinc nudo robore quercus,
 olim omnes exuta comas, hinc saxeus umbo,
 arbiter agricolis; finem iacet inter utrumque
 quale quater iaculo spatium, ter harundine, uincas.
 interea cantu Musarum nobile mulcens 355
 concilium citharaeque manus insertus Apollo
 Parnasi summo spectabat ab aethere terras.

...

357a

orsa deum, nam saepe Iouem Phlegramque suique
 anguis opus fratrumque pius cantarat honores.
 tunc aperit quis fulmen agat, quis sidera ducat 360
 spiritus, unde animi fluuiis, quae pabula uentis,
 quo fonte inmensum uiuat mare, quae uia solis
 praecipitet noctem, quae porrigat, imane tellus
 an media et rursus mundo succincta latenti.
 finis erat, differt auidas audire sorores, 365

dumque chelyn lauro tectumque inlustre coronae
subligat et picto discingit pectora limbo,
haud procul Herculeam Nemeen clamore reductus
aspicit atque illic ingens certaminis instar
quadriugi. noscit cunctos, et forte propinquo 370
constiterant Admetus et Amphiaraus in aruo.
tunc secum: 'quisnam iste duos, fidissima Phoebi
nomina, commisit deus in discrimina reges?
ambo pii carique ambo; nequeam ipse priorem
dicere. Peliacis hic cum famularer in aruis 375
(sic Iouis imperia et nigrae uoluere Sorores),
tura dabat famulo nec me sentire minorem
ausus; at hic tripodum comes et pius artis alumnus
aetheriae. potior meritis tamen ille, sed huius
extrema iam fila colu; datur ordo senectae 380
Admeto serumque mori; tibi nulla supersunt
gaudia, nam Thebae iuxta et tenebrosa uorago.
scis miser, et nostrae pridem cecinere uolucres.'
dixit, et os fletu paene inuiolabile tinctus
extemplo Nemeen radiante per aera saltu 385
ocior et patrio uenit igne suisque sagittis.
ipse olim in terris, caelo uestigia durant,
claraque per zephyros etiamnum semita lucet.
et iam sortitus Prothous uersarat aena
casside, iamque locus cuique est et liminis ordo. 390
terrarum decora ampla uiri, decora aequa iugales,
diuum utrumque genus, stant uno margine clausi,
spesque audaxque una metus et fiducia pallens.
nil fixum cordi: pugnant exire paudentque,
concurrit summos animosum frigus in artus. 395
qui dominis, idem ardor equis; face lumina surgunt,
ora sonant morsu, spumisque et sanguine ferrum
uritur, impulsu nequeunt obsistere postes
claustraque, compressae transfumat anhelitus irae.
stare adeo miserum est, pereunt uestigia mille 400
ante fugam, absentemque ferit grauis ungula campum.
par circumstant fidi, nexusque et torta iubarum

expediunt firmantque animos et plurima monstrant.
insonuit contra Tyrrhenum murmur, et omnes
exiluere loco. quae tantum carbasa ponto, 405
quae bello sic tela uolant, quae nubila caelo?
amnis hibernis minor est, minor impetus igni,
tardius astra cadunt, glomerantur tardius imbres,
tardius e summo decurrunt flumina monte.
emissos uidere atque agnouere Pelasgi, 410
et iam rapti oculis, iam caeco puluere mixti
una in nube latent, uultusque umbrante tumultu
uix inter sese clamore et nomine noscunt.
euoluere globum, et spatio quo quisque ualebat
diducti. delet sulcos iterata priores 415
orbita, nunc auidi pronos iuga pectore tangunt,
nunc pugnante genu et pressis duplicantur habenis.
colla toris crinita tument, stantesque repectit
aura iubas, bibit albentes humus arida nimbos.
fit sonus inmanisque pedum tenuisque rotarum: 420
nulla manu requies, densis insibilat aer
uerberibus; gelida non crebrior exilit Arcto
grando, nec Oleniis manant tot cornibus imbres.

senserat adductis alium praesagus Arion
stare ducem loris, dirumque expauerat insons 425
Oedipodioniden; iam illinc a limine discors
iratusque oneri solito truculentior ardet.
Inachidae credunt accensum laudibus; ille
aurigam fugit, aurigae furiale minatur
efferus, et campo dominum circumspicit omni. 430
ante tamen cunctos sequitur longeque secundus
Amphiaraus agit, quem Thessalus aequat eundo
Admetus; iuxta gemini, nunc Euneos ante
et nunc ante Thoas, cedunt uincuntque, nec umquam
ambitiosa pios conlidit gloria fratres. 435
postremum discrimen erant Chromis asper et asper
Hippodamus, non arte rudes, sed mole tenentur
cornipedum; prior Hippodamus fert ora sequentum,
fert gemitus multaque umeros incenditur aura.

sperauit flexae circum compendia metae 440
interius ductis Phoebeius augur habenis
anticipasse uiam; nec non et Thessalus heros
spe propiore calet, dum non cohibente magistro
spargitur in gyros dexterque exerrat Arion.
iam prior Oeclides et iam non tertius ibat 445
Admetus, laxo cum denique ab orbe reductus
aequoreus sonipes premit euaditque parumper
gausos; subit astra fragor, caelumque tremescit,
omniaque excusso patuere sedilia uulgo.
sed nec lora regit nec uerbera pallidus audet 450
Labdacides: lassa ueluti ratione magister
in fluctus, in saxa ruit nec iam amplius astra
respicit et uictam proiecit casibus artem.

rursus praecipites in recta ac deuia campi
obliquant tenduntque uias, iterum axibus axes 455
inflicti, radiisque rotae; pax nulla fidesque.
bella geri ferro leuius, bella horrida, credas;
is furor in laudes. trepidant mortemque minantur,
multaque transuersis praestringitur ungula campis.
nec iam sufficiunt stimuli, non uerbera; uoce 460
nominibusque cient Pholoen Admetus et Irin
funalemque Thoen, rapidum Danaeius augur
Ascheton increpitans meritumque uocabula Cycnum.
audit et Herculeum Strymon Chromin, Euneon audit
igneus Aetion; tardumque Cydona lacessit 465
Hippodamus, uariumque Thoas rogat ire Podarcen.
solus Echionides errante silentia curru
maesta tenet trepidaque timet se uoce fateri.

uixdum coeptus equis labor, et iam puluere quarto
campum ineunt, iamque et tepidis sudoribus artus 470
effeti, et crassum rapit eiectatque uaporem
cornipedum flammata sitis, nec iam integer illis
impetus, et longi suspendunt ilia flatus.
hic anceps Fortuna diu decernere primum
ausa uenit. ruit, Haemonium dum feruidus instat 475
Admetum superare, Thoas, nec praetulit ullam

frater opem. uelit ille quidem, sed Martius ante
obstitit Hippodamus mediasque inmisit habenas.
mox Chromis Hippodamum metae interioris ad orbem
uiribus Herculeis et toto robore patris 480
axe tenet presso; luctantur abire iugales
nequiquam frenosque et colla rigentia tendunt.
ut Siculas si quando rates tenet aestus et ingens
auster agit, medio stant uela tumentia ponto.
tunc ipsum fracto curru deturbat, et isset 485
ante Chromis; sed Thraces equi ut uidere iacentem
Hippodamum, redit illa fames, iam iamque trementem
partiti furiis, ni frena ipsosque frementes
oblitus palmae retro Tirynthius heros
torsisset uictusque et conlaudatus abisset. 490

at tibi promissos iamdudum Phoebus honores,
Amphiarae, cupit. tandem ratus apta fauori
tempora puluerei uenit in spatia horrida circi,
cum iam in fine uiae, et summum uictoria nutat;
anguicomam monstri effigiem, saeuissima uisu 495
ora, mouet siue ille Erebo seu finxit in astus
temporis, innumera certe formidine cultum
tollit in astra nefas. non illud ianitor atrae
impavidus Lethes, non ipsae horrore sine alto
Eumenides uidisse queant, turbasset euntes 500
Solis equos Martisque iugum. nam flauus Arion
ut uidit, saliere iubae, atque erectus in armos
stat sociumque iugi comitesque utrimque laboris
secum alte suspendit equos. ruit ilicet exul
Aonius nexusque diu per terga uolutus 505
exuit: abripitur longe moderamine liber
currus; at hunc putri praeter tellure iacentem
Taenarii currus et Thessalus axis et heros
Lemnius obliqua, quantum uitare dabatur,
transabiare fuga. tandem caligine mersum 510
erigit accursu comitum caput aegraque tollit
membra solo, et socero redit haud speratus Adrasto.
quis mortis, Thebane, locus, nisi dura negasset

Tisiphone, quantum poteras dimittere bellum!
te Thebe fraterque palam, te plangeret Argos, 515
te Nemea, tibi Lerna comas Larisaque supplex
poneret, Archemori maior colerere sepulcro.

tum uero Oeclides, quamquam iam certa sequenti
praemia, cum uacuum domino praeiret Arion,
ardet adhuc cupiens uel inanem uincere currum. 520
dat uires refouetque deus; uolat ocior Euro,
ceu modo carceribus dimissus in arua solutis,
uerberibusque iubas et terga lacescit habenis
Ascheton increpitansque leuem Cycnumque niuaem.
nunc, saltem dum nemo prior, rapit igneus orbes 525
axis, et effusae longe sparguntur harenae.
dat gemitum tellus et iam tum saeua minatur.
forsitan et uicto prior isset Arione Cynus,
sed uetat aequoreus uinci pater: hinc uice iusta
gloria mansit equo, cessit uictoria uati. 530

huic pretium palmae gemini cratera ferebant
Herculeum iuuenes: illum Tirynthius olim
ferre manu sola spumantemque ore supino
uertere, seu monstri uictor seu Marte, solebat.
Centauros habet arte truces aurumque figuris 535
terribile: hic mixta Lapitharum caede rotantur
saxa, faces (aliique iterum crateres); ubique
ingentes morientum irae; tenet ipse furem
Hylaeum et torta molitur robora barba.
at tibi Maeonio fertur circumflua limbo 540
pro meritis, Admete, chlamys repetitaque multo
murice: Phrixei natat hic contemptor ephēbus
aequoris et picta tralucet caerulus unda;
in latus ire manu mutaturusque uidetur
bracchia, nec siccum speres in stamine crinem; 545
contra autem frustra sedet anxia turre suprema
Sestias in speculis, moritur prope conscius ignis.
has Adrastus opes dono uictoribus ire
imperat; at generum famula solatur Achaea.

sollicitat tunc ampla uiros ad praemia cursu 550

praeceles: agile studium et tenuissima uirtus,
pacis opus, cum sacra uocant, nec inutile bellis
subsidiū, si dextra neget. prior omnibus Idas,
nuper Olympiacis umbratus tempora ramis,
prosilit; excipiunt plausu Pisaea iuuentus 555
Eleaeque manus. sequitur Sicyonius Alcon,
et bis in Isthmiaca uictor clamatus harena
Phaedimus, alipedumque fugam praegressus equorum
ante Dymas, sed tunc aeuo tardante secutus.
multi et, quos uarii tacet ignorantia uulgi, 560
hinc atque hinc subiere. sed Arcada Parthenopaeum
appellant densique cient uaga murmura circi.
nota parens cursu; quis Maenaliae Atalantes
nesciat egregium decus et uestigia cunctis
indepressa procis? onerat celeberrima natum 565
mater, et ipse procul fama iam notus inermes
narratur ceruas pedes inter aperta Lycae
tollere et emissum cursu deprendere telum.
tandem expectatus uolucris super agmina saltu
emicat et torto chlamydem diffibulat auro. 570
effulsere artus, membrorumque omnis aperta est
laetitia, insignes umeri, nec pectora nudis
deteriora genis, latuitque in corpore uultus.
ipse tamen formae laudem aspernatur et arcet
mirantes; tunc Palladios non inscius haustus 575
incubuit pinguique cutem fuscatur oliuo.
hoc Idas, hoc more Dymas alique nitescent.
sic ubi tranquillo perlucet sidera ponto
uibaturque fretis caeli stellantis imago,
omnia clara nitent, sed clarior omnia supra 580
Hesperus exercet radios, quantusque per altum
aethera, caeruleis tantus monstratur in undis.
proximus et forma nec multum segnior Idas
cursibus atque aeuo iuxta prior; attamen illi
iam tenuem pingues florem induxere palaestrae, 585
deserpitque genis nec se lanugo fatetur
intonsae sub nube comae. tunc rite citatos

explorant acuuntque gradus, uariasque per artes
instimulant docto languentia membra tumultu:
poplite nunc sidunt flexo, nunc lubrica forti 590
pectora conlidunt plausu, nunc ignea tollunt
crura breuemque fugam necopino fine reponunt.

ut ruit atque aequum summisit regula limen,
corripuere leues spatium, campoque refulsit
nuda cohors: uolucres isdem modo tardius aruis 595
isse uidentur equi; credas e plebe Cydonum
Parthorumque fuga totidem exiluisse sagittas.
non aliter, celeres Hyrcana per auia cerui
cum procul impasti fremitum accepere leonis
siue putant, rapit attonitos fuga caeca metusque 600
congregat, et longum dant cornua mixta fragorem.
effugit hic oculos rapida puer ocior aura
Maenalius, quem deinde gradu premit horridus Idas
inspiratque umero, flatuque et pectoris umbra
terga premit. post ambiguo discrimine tendunt 605
Phaedimus atque Dymas, illis celer inminet Alcon.
flauus ab intonso pendebat uertice crinis
Arcados; hoc primis Triuiæ pascebat ab annis
munus et, Ogygio uictor cum Marte redisset,
nequiquam patriis audax promiserat aris. 610
tunc liber nexu lateque in terga solutus
occursu Zephyri retro fugit et simul ipsum
impedit infestoque uolans obtenditur Idæ.
inde dolum iuuenis fraudique accommoda sensit
tempora; iam finem iuxta, dum limina uictor 615
Parthenopæus init, correpto crine reductum
occupat, et longe primus ferit ostia portæ.

Arcades arma fremunt, armis defendere regem,
ni raptum decus et meriti reddantur honores,
contendunt totoque parant descendere circo. 620
sunt et quis Idæ placeat dolus. ipse regesta
Parthenopæus humo uultumque oculosque madentes
obruit, accessit lacrimarum gratia formæ.
pectora nunc maerens, nunc ora indigna cruento

ungue secat meritamque comam, furit undique clamor 625
dissonus, ambiguumque senis cunctatur Adraști
consilium. tandem ipse refert: ‘compescite litem,
o pueri! uirtus iterum temptanda; sed ite
limite non uno, latus hoc conceditur Idae,
tu diuersa tene; fraus cursibus omnis abesto.’ 630

audierant, dictoque manent. mox numina supplex
adfatu tacito iuuenis Tegeaeus adorat:
‘diua potens nemorum (tibi enim hic, tibi crinis honori
debitus, eque tuo uenit haec iniuria uoto),
si bene quid genetrix, si quid uenatibus ipse 635
promerui, ne, quaeso, sinas hoc omine Thebas
ire nec Arcadiae tantum meruisse pudorem.’
auditum manifesta fides: uix campus euntem
sentit, et exilis plantis interuenit aer,
raraque non fracto uestigia puluere pendent. 640
inrumpit clamore fores, clamore recurrit
ante ducem prensaue fouet suspiria palma.
finiti cursus, operumque insignia praesto.
Arcas equum dono, clipeum gerit improbus Idas,
cetera plebs Lyciis uadit contenta pharetris. 645

tunc uocat, emissio si quis decernere disco
impiger et uires uelit ostentare superbas.
it iussus Pterelas et aenae lubrica massae
pondera uix toto curuatus corpore iuxta
deicit; inspectant taciti expenduntque laborem 650
Inachidae. mox turba ruunt, duo gentis Achaeae,
tres Ephyreiadae, Pisa satus unus, Acarnan
septimus; et plures agitabat gloria, ni se
arduus Hippomedon cauea stimulante tulisset
in medios, lateque ferens sub pectore dextro 655
orbem alium: ‘hunc potius, iuuenes, qui moenia saxis
frangere, qui Tyrias deiectum uaditis arces,
hunc rapite: ast illud cui non iaculabile dextrae
pondus?’ et arreptum nullo conamine iecit
in latus. absistunt procul attonitique fatentur 660
cedere; uix unus Phlegyas acerque Menestheus

(hos etiam pudor et magni tenuere parentes)
promisere manum; concessit cetera pubes
sponte et adorato rediit ingloria disco.
qualis Bistoniis clipeus Mauortis in aruis 665
luce mala Pangaea ferit solemque refulgens
territat incussaue dei graue mugit ab hasta.

Pisaeus Phlegyas opus incohat et simul omnes
abstulit in se oculos: ea uiso corpore uirtus
promissa. ac primum terra discumque manumque 670
asperat, excusso mox circum puluere uersat,
quod latus in digitos, mediae quod certius ulnae
conueniat, non artis egens: hic semper amori
ludus erat, patriae non tantum ubi laudis obiret
sacra, sed alternis Alpheon utrumque solebat 675
metari ripis et, qua latissima distant,
non umquam merso transmittere flumina disco.
ergo operum fidens non protinus horrida campi
iugera, sed caelo dextram metitur, humique
pressus utroque genu collecto sanguine discum 680
ipse super sese rotat atque in nubila condit.
ille citus sublime petit similisque cadenti
crescit in aduersum, tandemque exhaustus ab alto
tardior ad terram redit atque inmergitur aruis.
sic cadit, attonitis quotiens auellitur astris, 685
Solis opaca soror; procul auxiliantia gentes
aera crepant frustraue timent, at Thessala uictrix
ridet anhelantes audito carmine bigas.
conlaudent Danai ~sed non tibi molle tuenti,
Hippomedon~ maiorque manus speratur in aequo. 690
atque illi extemplo, cui spes infringere dulce
inmodicas, Fortuna uenit. quid numina contra
tendere fas homini? spatium iam inmane parabat,
iam ceruix conuersa, et iam latus omne redibat:
excidit ante pedes elapsum pondus et ictus 695
destituit frustraue manum demisit inanem.
ingemuere omnes, rarisque ea uisa uoluptas.
inde ad conatus timida subit arte Menestheus

cautior, et multum te, Maia crete, rogato
 molis praeualidae castigat puluere lapsus. 700
 illa manu magna et multum felicior exit,
 nec partem exiguam circi transuecta quieuit.
 fit sonus, et fixa signatur terra sagitta.
 tertius Hippomedon ualida ad certamina tardos
 molitur gressus; namque illum corde sub alto 705
 et casus Phlegyae monet et fortuna Menesthei.
 erigit adsuetum dextrae gestamen, et alte
 sustentans rigidumque latus fortesque lacertos
 consulit ac uasto contorquet turbine, et ipse
 prosequitur. fugit horrendo per inania saltu 710
 iamque procul meminit dextrae seruatque tenorem
 discus, nec dubia iunctaue Menesthea uictum
 transabiit meta: longe super aemula signa
 consedit uiridesque umeros et opaca theatri
 culmina ceu latae tremefecit mole ruinae: 715
 quale uaporifera saxum Polyphemus ab Aetna
 lucis egente manu tamen in uestigia puppis
 audita iuxtaque inimicum exegit Vlixen.
 [sic et Aloidae, cum iam calcaret Olympum
 desuper Ossa rigens, ipsum glaciale ferebant 720
 Pelion et trepido sperabant iungere caelo.]
 tum genitus Talao uictori tigrin inanem
 ire iubet, fuluo quae circumfusa nitebat
 margine et extremos auro mansueuerat ungues.
 Cnosiacos arcus habet et uaga tela Menestheus. 725
 ‘at tibi’ ait ‘Phlegya, casu frustrate sinistro,
 hunc, quondam nostri decus auxiliumque Pelasgi,
 ferre damus, neque enim Hippomedon inuiderit, ensem.
 nunc opus est animis: infestos tollite caestus
 comminus; haec bellis et ferro proxima uirtus.’ 730
 constitit inmanis cerni inmanisque timeri
 Argolicus Capaneus, ac dum nigrantia plumbo
 tegmina cruda boum non mollior ipse lacertis
 induitur, ‘date tot iuuenum de milibus unum
 huc’ ait ‘atque utinam potius de stirpe ueniret 735

aemulus Aonia, quem fas demittere leto,
nec mea crudelis ciuili sanguine uirtus.’
obstipuerunt animi, fecitque silentia terror.
tandem insperatus nuda de plebe Laconum
prosilit Alcidas: mirantur Dorici regum 740
agmina, sed socii fretum Polluce magistro
norant et sacras inter creuisse palaestras.
ipse deus posuitque manus et brachia finxit
(materiae suadebat amor); tunc saepe locauit
comminus, et simili stantem miratus in ira 745
sustulit exultans nudumque ad pectora pressit.
illum indignatur Capaneus ridetque uocantem,
ut miserans, poscitque alium; tandemque coactus
restitit, et stimulis iam languida colla tumescunt.
fulmineas alte suspensi corpora plantis 750
erexere manus; tuto procul ora recessu
armorum in speculis, aditusque ad uulnera clausi.
hic, quantum Stygiis Tityos consurgat ab aruis,
si torvae patiantur aues, tanta undique pandit
membrorum spatia et tantis ferus ossibus extat. 755
hic paulo ante puer, sed enim maturius aevo
robur, et ingentes spondet tener impetus annos,
quem uinci haud quisquam saeuo neque sanguine tingi
malit, et erecto timeat spectacula uoto.

ut sese permensi oculis et uterque priorem 760
sperare locum, non protinus ira nec ictus:
alternus paulum timor et permixta furori
consilia, inclinant tantum contraria iactu
brachia et explorant caestus hebetantque terendo.
doctior hic differt animum metuensque futuri 765
cunctatus uires dispensat: at ille nocendi
prodigus incautusque sui ruit omnis et ambas
consumit sine lege manus atque inrita frendit
insurgens seque ipse premit. sed prouidus astu
et patria uigil arte Lacon hos reicit ictus, 770
hos cauet; interdum nutu capitisque citati
integer obsequio, manibus nunc obuia tela

discutiens, instat gressu uultuque recedit:
saepe etiam iniustis conlatum uiribus hostem
(is uigor ingenio, tanta experientia dextrae est) 775
ultra audax animis intratque et obumbrat et alte
adsilit. ut praeceps cumulo salit unda minantes
in scopulos et fracta redit, sic ille furem
circumit expugnans; leuat ecce diuque minatur
in latus inque oculos; illum rigida arma cauentem 780
auocat ac manibus necopinum interserit ictum
callidus et mediam designat uulnere frontem:
iam cruor, et tepido signantur tempora riuo.
nescit adhuc Capaneus subitumque per agmina murmur
miratur; uerum ut fessam super ora reduxit 785
forte manum et summo maculas in uellere uidit,
non leo, non iaculo tantum indignata recepto
tigris: agit toto cedentem feruidus aruo
praecipitatque retro iuuenem atque in terga supinat,
dentibus horrendum stridens, geminatque rotatas 790
multiplicatque manus. rapiunt conamina uenti,
pars cadit in caestus; motu Spartanus acuto
mille cauet lapsas circum caua tempora mortes
auxilioque pedum, sed non tamen inmemor artis
aduersus fugit et fugiens tamen ictibus obstat. 795

et iam utrumque labor suspiriaeque aegra fatigant:
tardius ille premit, nec iam hic absistere uelox,
defectique ambo genibus pariterque quierunt.
sic ubi longa uagos lassarunt aequora nautas
et signum de puppe datum, posuere parumper 800
brachia: uix requies, iam uox citat altera remos.
ecce iterum inmodice uenientem eludit et exit
sponte ruens mersusque umeris: effunditur ille
in caput, adsurgentem alio puer improbus ictu
perculit euentuque impalluit ipse secundo. 805
clamorem Inachidae, quantum non litora, tollunt,
non nemora. illum ab humo conantem ut uidit Adrastus
tollentemque manus et non toleranda parantem:
‘ite, oro, socii, furit, ite, opponite dextras,

festinate, furit, palmamque et praemia ferte! 810
 non prius, effracto quam misceat ossa cerebro,
 absistet, uideo; moriturum auferte Lacona.
 nec mora, prorumpit Tydeus, nec iussa recusat
 Hippomedon; tunc uix ambo conatibus ambas
 restringunt cohibentque manus ac plurima suadent: 815
 'uincis, abi; pulchrum uitam donare minori.
 noster et hic bellique comes.' nil frangitur heros,
 ramumque oblatumque manu thoraca repellit
 uociferans: 'liceat! non has ego puluere crasso
 atque cruore genas, meruit quibus iste fauorem 820
 semiuiri, foedem, mittamque informe sepulcro
 corpus et Oebalio donem lugere magistro?'
 dicit; at hunc socii tumidum et uicisse negantem
 auertunt, contra laudant insignis alumnum
 Taygeti longeque minas risere Lacones. 825
 iamdudum uariae laudes et conscia uirtus
 Tydea magnanimum stimulis urgumentibus angunt.
 ille quidem et disco bonus et contendere cursu,
 nec caestu bellare minor, sed corde labores
 ante alios erat uncta pale. sic otia Martis 830
 degere et armiferas laxare adsueuerat iras
 ingentes contra ille uiros Acheloia circum
 litora felicesque deo monstrante palaestras.
 ergo ubi luctandi iuuenes animosa citauit
 gloria, terrificos umeris Aetolus amictus 835
 exiuit patriumque suem. leuat ardua contra
 membra Cleonaeae stirpis iactator Agylleus,
 Herculea nec mole minor, sic grandibus alte
 insurgens umeris hominem super improbus exit.
 sed non ille rigor patriumque in corpore robur: 840
 luxuriant artus, effusaque sanguine laxo
 membra natant; unde haec audax fiducia tantum
 Oenidae superare parem. quamquam ipse uideri
 exiguus, grauiam ossa tamen nodisque lacerti
 difficiles. numquam hunc animum natura minori 845
 corpore nec tantas ausa est includere uires.

postquam oleo gauisa cutis, petit aequor uterque
 procursu medium atque hausta uestitur harena.
 tum madidos artus alterno puluere siccant,
 collaque demersere umeris et bracchia late 850
 uara tenent. iam tunc astu deducit in aequum
 callidus et celsum procuruat Agyllea Tydeus,
 summissus tergo et genibus uicinus harenae.
 ille autem, Alpini ueluti regina cupressus
 uerticis urgentes ceruicem inclinat ad Austros 855
 uix sese radice tenens, terraeque propinquat,
 iamdudum aetherias eadem reditura sub auras:
 non secus ingentes artus praecelsus Agylleus
 sponte premit paruumque gemens duplicatur in hostem,
 et iam alterna manus frontemque umerosque latusque 860
 collaque pectoraque et uitantia crura lacessit.
 interdumque diu pendent per mutua fulti
 bracchia, nunc saeui digitorum uincula frangunt.
 non sic ductores gemini gregis horrida tauri
 bella mouent; medio coniunx stat candida prato 865
 uictorem expectans, rumpunt obnixa furentes
 pectora, subdit amor stimulos et uulnera sanat:
 fulmineo sic dente sues, sic hispida turpes
 proelia uillosis ineunt complexibus ursi.
 uis eadem Oenidae; nec sole aut puluere fessa 870
 membra labant, riget arta cutis durisque laborum
 castigata toris. contra non integer ille
 flatibus alternis aegroque effetus hiatu
 exuit ingestas fluuio sudoris harenas
 ac furtim rapta sustentat pectora terra. 875
 instat agens Tydeus fictumque in colla minatus
 crura subit; coeptis non eualuere potiri
 frustratae breuitate manus, uenit arduus ille
 desuper oppressumque ingentis mole ruinae
 condidit. haud aliter collis scrutator Hiberi, 880
 cum subiit longeque diem uitamque reliquit,
 si tremuit suspensus ager subitumque fragorem
 rupta dedit tellus, latet intus monte soluto

obrutus, ac penitus fractum obtritumque cadauer
 indignantem animam propriis non reddidit astris. 885
 acrior hoc Tydeus, animisque et pectore supra est.
 nec mora, cum uinclis onerique elapsus iniquo
 circumit errantem et tergo necopinus inhaeret,
 mox latus et firmo celer implicat ilia nexu,
 poplitibus genua inde premens euadere nodos 890
 nequiquam et lateri dextram insertare parantem
 improbans, horrendum uisu ac mirabile pondus,
 sustulit. Herculeis pressum sic fama lacertis
 terrigenam sudasse Libyn, cum fraude reperta
 raptus in excelsum, nec iam spes ulla cadendi, 895
 nec licet extrema matrem contingere planta.
 fit sonus, et laetos attollunt agmina plausus.
 tunc alte librans inopinum sponte remisit
 obliquumque dedit, procumbentemque secutus
 colla simul dextra, pedibus simul inguina uinxit. 900
 deficit obsessus soloque pudore repugnat.
 tandem pectus humi pronamque extensus in aluum
 sternitur, ac longo maestus post tempore surgit,
 turpia signata linquens uestigia terra.
 palmam autem dextra laeuaque nitentia dono 905
 arma ferens Tydeus: 'quid si non sanguinis huius
 partem haud exigua (scitis) Dircaeus haberet
 campus, ubi hae nuper Thebarum foedera plagae?'
 haec simul ostentans quaesitaque praemia laudum
 dat sociis, sequitur neglectus Agyllea thorax. 910
 sunt et qui nudo subeant concurrere ferro:
 iamque aderant instructi armis Epidaurius Agreus
 et nondum fatis Dircaeus agentibus exul.
 dux uetat Iasides: 'manet ingens copia leti,
 o iuuenes! seruate animos audidumque furorem 915
 sanguinis aduersi. tuque o, quem propter auita
 iugera, dilectas cui desolauimus urbes,
 ne, precor, ante aciem ius tantum casibus esse
 fraternisque sinas (abigant hoc numina!) uotis.'
 sic ait, atque ambos aurata casside ditat. 920

tum generum, ne laudis egens, iubet ardua necti
tempora Thebarumque ingenti uoce citari
uictorem: dirae retinebant omina Parcae.

ipsum etiam proprio certamina festa labore
dignari et tumulis supremum hunc addere honorem 925
hortantur proceres ac, ne uictoria desit
una ducum numero, fundat uel Lyctia cornu
tela rogant, tenui uel nubila transeat hasta.
obsequitur gaudens, uiridique ex aggere in aequum
stipatus summis iuuenum descendit; at illi 930
pone leues portat pharetras et cornua iussus
armiger: ingentem iactu transmittere circum
eminus et dictae dare uulnera destinat orno.

quis fluere occultis rerum neget omina causis?
fata patent homini, piget inseruare, peritque 935
uenturi praemissa fides: sic omina casum
fecimus, et uires hausit Fortuna nocendi.

campum emensa breui fatalis ab arbore tacta,
horrendum uisu, per quas modo fugerat auras,
uenit harundo retro uersumque a fine tenorem 940
pertulit, et notae iuxta ruit ora pharetrae.
multa duces errore serunt: hi nubila et altos
occurrisse Notos, aduersi roboris ictu
tela repulsa alii. penitus latet exitus ingens
monstratumque nefas: uni remeabile bellum, 945
et tristes domino spondebat harundo recursus.

Liber Septimus

Atque ea cunctantes Tyrii primordia belli
Iuppiter haud aequo respexit corde Pelasgos,
concussitque caput motu quo celsa laborant
sidera proclamatque adici ceruicibus Atlans.
tunc ita uelocem Tegees adfatus alumnum: 5
‘i, medium rapido Borean inlabere saltu
Bistonias, puer, usque domos axemque niuosi
sideris, Oceano uetitum qua Parrhasis ignem
nubibus hibernis et nostro pascitur imbri.
atque ibi seu posita respirat cuspide Mauors, 10
quamquam inuisa quies, seu, quod reor, arma tubasque
insatiatus habet caraeque in sanguine gentis
luxuriat: propere monitus iramque parentis
ede, nihil parcens. nempe olim accendere iussus
Inachias acies atque omne quod Isthmius umbo 15
distinet et raucae circumtonat ira Maleae:
illi, uix muros limenque egressa iuuentus,
sacra colunt; credas bello rediisse, tot instant
plausibus, offensique sedent ad iusta sepulcri.
hicne tuus, Gradiue, furor? sonat orbe recusso 20
discus et Oebalii coeunt in proelia caestus.
at si ipsi rabies ferrique insana uoluptas
qua tumet, inmeritas cineri dabit impius urbes
ferrum ignemque ferens, implorantesque Tonantem
sternet humi populos miserumque exhauriet orbem. 25
nunc lenis belli nostraque remittitur ira.
quodni praecipitat pugnas dictoque iubentis
ocius impingit Tyriis Danaa agmina muris
(nil equidem crudele minor), sit mite bonumque
numen et effreni laxentur in otia mores, 30
reddat equos ensemque mihi, nec sanguinis ultra
ius erit: aspiciam terras pacemque iubebo
omnibus; Ogygio sat erit Tritonia bello.’
dixerat, et Thracum Cyllenius arua subibat;

atque illum Arctoeae labentem cardine portae 35
tempestas aeterna plagae praetentaque caelo
agmina nimborum primique Aquilonis hiatus
in diuersa ferunt: crepat aurea grandine multa
palla, nec Arcadii bene protegit umbra galeri.
hic steriles delubra notat Mauortia siluas 40
(horrescitque tuens), ubi mille furoribus illi
cingitur auerso domus inmansueta sub Haemo.
ferrea compago laterum, ferro arta teruntur
limina, ferratis incumbunt tecta columnis.
laeditur aduersum Phoebi iubar, ipsaque sedem 45
lux timet, et durus contristat sidera fulgor.
digna loco statio: primis salit Impetus amens
e foribus caecumque Nefas Iraeque rubentes
exanguesque Metus, occultisque ensibus astant
Insidiae geminumque tenens Discordia ferrum. 50
innumeris strepit aula Minis, tristissima Virtus
stat medio, laetusque Furor uultuque cruento
Mors armata sedet; bellorum solus in aris
sanguis et incensis qui raptus ab urbibus ignis.
terrarum exuuiae circum et fastigia templi 55
captae insignibant gentes: caelataque ferro
fragmina portarum bellatricesque carinae
et uacui currus protritaque curribus ora,
paene etiam gemitus: adeo uis omnis et omne
uulnus. ubique ipsum, sed non usquam ore remisso 60
cernere erat: talem diuina Mulciber arte
ediderat; nondum radiis monstratus adulter
foeda catenato luerat conubia lecto.

quaerere templorum regem uix coeperat ales
Maenalius, tremit ecce solum et mugire refractis 65
corniger Hebrus aquis; tunc quod pecus utile bello
uallum infestabat, trepidas spumare per herbas,
signa aduentantis, clausaeque adamante perenni
dissiluerunt fores. Hyrcano in sanguine pulcher
ipse subit curru, diraque aspergine latos 70
mutat agros, spolia a tergo flentesque cateruae.

dant siluae nixque alta locum; regit atra iugales
sanguinea Bellona manu longaue fatigat
cuspidē. deriguit uisu Cyllenia proles
summisitque genas: ipsi reuerentia patri, 75
si prope sit, dematque minas nec talia mandet.
‘quod Iouis imperium, magno quid ab aethere portas?’
occupat Armipotens, ‘neque enim hunc, germane, sub axem
sponte uenis hiemesque meas, cui roscida iuxta
Maenala et aestiui clementior aura Lycaei.’ 80
ille refert consulta patris. nec longa moratus,
sicut anhelabant, iuncto sudore uolantes
Mars impellit equos, resides in proelia Graios
ipse etiam indignans. uidit pater altus et irae
iam leuior tardo flectebat pondere uultum. 85
ut si quando ruit debellatasque relinquit
Eurus aquas, pax ipsa tumet pontumque iacentem
exanimis iam uoluit hiems: nondum arma carinis
omnia, nec toto respirant pectore nautae.

finierat pugnas honor exequialis inermes; 90
necdum aberant coetus, cunctisque silentibus heros
uina solo fundens cinerem placabat Adrastus
Archemori: ‘da, parue, tuum trieteride multa
instaurare diem, nec saucius Arcadas aras
malit adire Pelops Eleaque pulset eburna 95
templa manu, nec Castaliis altaribus anguis,
nec sua pinigero magis adnatet umbra Lechaeo.
nos te lugenti, puer, infitiamur Auerno,
maestaque perpetuis sollemnia iungimus astris,
nunc festina cohors. at si Boeotia ferro 100
uertere tecta dabis, magnis tunc dignior aris,
tunc deus, Inachias nec tantum culta per urbes
numina, captiuis etiam iurabere Thebis.’
dux ea pro cunctis, eadem sibi quisque uouebat.

iam pronis Gradius equis Ephyræa premebat 105
litora, qua summas caput Acrocorinthos in auras
tollit et alterna geminum mare protegit umbra.
inde unum dira comitum de plebe Pauorem

quadripedes anteire iubet: non alter anhelos
insinuare metus animoque auertere uires 110
aptior; innumerae monstro uocesque manusque
et facies quamcumque uelit; bonus omnia credi
auctor et horrificis lymphare incursibus urbes.
si geminos soles ruituraque suadeat astra,
aut nutare solum aut ueteres descendere siluas, 115
a! miseri uidisse putant. tunc acre nouabat
ingenium: falso Nemeaeum puluere campum
erigit; attoniti tenebrosam a uertice nubem
respexere duces; falso clamore tumultum
auget, et arma uirum pulsusque imitatur equorum, 120
terribilemque uagas ululatum spargit in auras.
exiluere animi, dubiumque in murmure uulgu
pendet: 'ubi iste fragor? ni fallimur aure. sed unde
puluereo stant astra globo? num Ismenius ultro
miles? ita est: ueniunt. tanta autem audacia Thebis? 125
an dubitent, age, dum inferias et busta colamus?'
haec Pauor attonitis; uariosque per agmina uultus
induitur: nunc Pisaeis e milibus unus,
nunc Pylus, nunc ore Lacon, hostesque propinquos
adiurat turmasque metu consternat inani. 130
nil falsum trepidis. ut uero amentibus ipse
incidit et sacrae circum fastigia uallis
turbine praeuectus rapido ter sustulit hastam,
ter concussit equos, clipeum ter pectore plausit:
arma, arma insani sua quisque ignotaque nullo 135
more rapit, mutant galeas alienaque cogunt
ad iuga cornipedes; ferus omni in pectore saeuit
mortis amor caedisque, nihil flagrantibus obstat:
praecipitant redimuntque moras. sic litora uento
incipiente fremunt, fugitur cum portus; ubique 140
uela fluunt, laxi iactantur ubique rudentes;
iamque natant remi, natat omnis in aequore summo
ancora, iam dulcis medii de gurgite ponti
respicitur tellus comitesque a puppe relict.

uiderat Inachias rapidum glomerare cohortes 145

Bacchus iter; gemit Tyriam conuersus ad urbem,
altricemque domum et patrios reminiscitur ignes,
purpureum tristi turbatus pectore uultum:
non crines, nonserta loco, dextramque reliquit
thyrsus, et intactae ceciderunt cornibus uuae. 150
ergo ut erat lacrimis lapsoque inhonoris amictu
ante Iouem (et tunc forte polum secretus habebat)
constitit, haud umquam facie conspectus in illa
(nec causae latuere patrem), supplexque profatur:
'excindisne tuas, diuum sator optime, Thebas? 155
saeua adeo coniunx? nec te telluris amatae
deceptique laris miseret cinerumque meorum?
esto, olim inuitum iaculatus nubibus ignem,
credimus: en iterum atra refert incendia terris,
nec Styge iurata, nec paelicis arte rogatus. 160
quis modus? an nobis pater iratusque bonusque
fulmen habes? sed non Danaeia limina talis
Parrhasiumque nemus Ledaeeasque ibis Amyclas.
scilicet e cunctis ego neglectissima natis
progenies? ego nempe tamen qui dulce ferenti 165
pondus eram, cui tu dignatus limina uitae
praereptumque uterum et maternos reddere menses.
adde quod imbellis rarisque exercita castris
turba meas acies, mea tantum proelia norunt,
nectere fronde comas et ad inspirata rotari 170
buxa: timent thyrsos nuptarum et proelia matrum.
unde tubas Martemque pati, qui feruidus ecce
quanta parat? quid si ille tuos Curetas in arma
ducat et innocuis iubeat decernere peltis?
quin etiam inuisos (sic hostis defuit?) Argos 175
eligis! o ipsis, genitor, grauiora periclis
iussa: nouercales ruimus ditare Mycenae!
cedo equidem. quo sacra tamen ritusque peremptae
gentis, et in tumulos si quid male feta reliquit
mater, abire iubes? Thracen siluasque Lycurgi? 180
anne triumphatos fugiam captiuus ad Indos?
da sedem profugo. potuit Latonia frater

saxa (nec inuideo) defigere Delon et imis
commendare fretis; cara summouit ab arce
hostiles Tritonis aquas; uidi ipse potentem 185
gentibus Eois Epaphum dare iura, nec ullas
Cyllene secreta tubas Minoaue curat
Ida: quid heu tantum nostris offenderis aris?
hic tibi (quando minor iam nostra potentia) noctes
Herculeae placitusque uagae Nycteidos ardor, 190
hic Tyrium genus et nostro felicior igne
taurus: Agenoreos saltem tutare nepotes.'

inuidiam risit pater, et iam poplite flexum
sternentemque manus tranquillus ad oscula tollit
inque uicem placida orsa refert: 'non coniugis ista 195
consiliis, ut rere, puer, nec saeua roganti
sic expositus ego: inmoto deducimur orbe
fatorum; ueteres seraeque in proelia causae.
nam cui tanta quies irarum aut sanguinis usus
parcior humani? uidet axis et ista per aeuum 200
mecum aeterna domus quotiens iam torta reponam
fulmina, quam rarus terris hic imperet ignis.
quin etiam inuitus magna ulciscendaque passis
aut Lapithas Marti aut ueterem Calydonia Dianae
expugnare dedi: nimia est iactura pigetque 205
tot mutare animas, tot reddere corpora uitae.
Labdacios uero Pelopisque a stirpe nepotes
tardum abolere mihi; scis ipse (ut crimina mittam
Dorica) quam promptae superos incessere Thebae;
te quoque++sed, quoniam uetus excidit ira, silebo. 210
non tamen aut patrio respersus sanguine Pentheus,
aut matrem scelerasse toris aut crimine fratres
progenuisse reus, lacero tua lustra repleuit
funere: ubi hi fletus, ubi tunc ars tanta precandi?
ast ego non proprio diros impendo dolori 215
Oedipodionidas: rogat hoc tellusque polusque
et pietas et laesa fides naturaque et ipsi
Eumenidum mores. sed tu super urbe moueri
parce tua: non hoc statui sub tempore rebus

occasum Aoniis, ueniet suspectior aetas 220
ultoresque alii: nunc regia Iuno queretur.
his ille auditis mentemque habitumque recepit;
ut, cum sole malo tristisque rosaria pallent
usta Noto, si clara dies Zephyrique refecit
aura polum, redit omnis honos, emissaque lucent 225
germina, et informes ornat sua gloria uirgas.

nuntius attonitas iamdudum Eteoclis ad aures
explorata ferens longo docet agmine Graios
ire duces, nec iam Aoniis procul afore campis;
quacumque ingressi tremere ac miserescere cunctos 230
Thebarum; qui stirpe refert, qui nomine et armis.
ille metum condens audire exposcit et odit
narrantem: hinc socios dictis stimulare suasque
metiri decernit opes. exciuerat omnem
Aoniam Euboeamque et Phocidos arua propinquae 235
Mars, ita dulce Ioui. longe fugit ordine uelox
tessera: propellunt acies, seseque sub armis
ostentant; subeunt campo qui proximus urbi
damnatus bellis patet expectatque furores.
nondum hostes contra, trepido tamen agmine matres 240
conscendunt muros, inde arma nitentia natis
et formidandos monstrant sub casside patres.

turre procul sola nondum concessa uideri
Antigone populis teneras defenditur atra
ueste genas; iuxtaque comes quo Laius ibat 245
armigero; tunc uirgo senem regina ueretur.
quae sic orsa prior: 'spesne obstatura Pelasgis
haec uexilla, pater? Pelopis descendere totas
audimus gentes: dic, o precor, extera regum
agmina; nam uideo quae noster signa Menoeceus, 250
quae noster regat arma Creon, quam celsus aena
Sphinge per ingentes Homoloidas exeat Haemon.'
sic rudis Antigone, senior cui talia Phorbas:
'mille sagittiferos gelidae de colle Tanagrae
promouet ecce Dryas; hic, cui niuea arma tridentem 255
atque auro rude fulmen habent, Orionis alti

non falsus uirtute nepos: procul, oro, paternum
omen et innuptae uetus excidat ira Dianae.
iungunt se castris regisque in nomen adoptant
Ocalee Medeonque et confertissima lucis 260
Nisa Dionaeisque auibus circumsona Thisbe.
proximus Eurymedon, qui pastoralia Fauni
arma patris pinuque iubas imitatur equinas,
terribilis siluis: reor et Mauorte cruento
talīs erit. dītes pecorum comitantur Erythrae, 265
qui Scolon densamque iugis Eteonon iniquis,
qui breue litus Hyles Atalantaeamque superbi
Schoenon habent notique colunt uestigia campi;
fraxineas Macetum uibrant de more sarisas
saeuaque difficiles excludere uulnera peltas. 270
ecce autem clamore ruunt Neptunia proles
Onchesti, quos pinigeris Mycalesos in agris
Palladiusque Melas Hecataeaeque gurgite nutrit
Gargaphie, quorumque nouis Haliartos aristis
inuidet et nimia sata laeta superuenit herba. 275
tela rudes trunci, galeae uacua ora leonum,
arborei dant scuta sinus. hos regis egenos
Amphion en noster agit (cognoscere pronum,
uirgo), lyra galeam tauroque insignis auito.
macte animo iuuenis! medios parat ire per enses 280
nudaque pro caris opponere pectora muris.
uos etiam nostris, Heliconia turba, uenitis
addere rebus opem; tuque, o Permesse, canoris
et felix Olmie uadis, armastis alumnos
bellorum resides. patriis concentibus audis 285
exultare gregem, quales, cum pallida cedit
bruma, renidentem deducunt Strymona cycni.
ite alacres, numquam uestri morientur honores,
bellaque perpetuo memorabunt carmine Musae.'

dixerat, et paulum uirgo interfata loquenti: 290
'illi autem, quanam iunguntur origine fratres?
sic certe paria arma uiris, sic exit in auras
cassidis aequus apex; utinam haec concordia nostris!'

cui senior ridens: 'non prima errore uidendi
falleris, Antigone: multi hos (nam decipit aetas) 295
dixerunt fratres. pater est natusque, sed aeui
confudere modos: puerum Lapithaona nymphe
Dercetis expertem thalami crudumque maritis
ignibus ante diem cupido uiolauit amore
improba conubii; nec longum, et pulcher Alatreus 300
editus, ac primae genitorem in flore iuuentae
consequitur traxitque notas et miscuit annos.
et nunc sic fratres mentito nomine gaudent,
plus pater: hunc olim iuuat et uentura senectus.
tercentum genitor totidemque in proelia natus 305
exercent equites: hi deseruisse feruntur
exilem Glisanta Coroniamque feracem,
messe Coroniam, Baccho Glisanta colentes.
sed potius celsos umbrantem hunc aspice late
Hypsea quadriiugos; clipei septemplice tauro 310
laeua, ter insuto seruantur pectora ferro,
pectora: nam tergo numquam metus. hasta uetustum
siluarum decus, emissae cui peruia semper
armaque corporaque et numquam manus inrita uoti.
Asopos genuisse datur, dignusque uideri 315
tunc pater, abreptis cum torrentissimus exit
pontibus, aut natae tumidus cum uirginis ultor
flumina concussit generum indignata Tonantem.
namque ferunt raptam patriis Aeginan ab undis
amplexu latuisse Iouis: furit amnis et astris 320
infensus bellare parat (nondum ista licebant
nec superis); stetit audaces effusus in iras,
conseruitque manum, nec quem imploraret habebat,
donec uix tonitru summotus et igne trisulco
cessit. adhuc ripis animosus gurgēs anhelis 325
fulmineum cinerem magnaeque insignia poenae
gaudet et Aetnaeos in caelum efflare uapores.
talem Cadmeo mirabimur Hypsea campo,
si modo placauit felix Aegina Tonantem.
ducit Itonaeos et Alalcomenaea Mineruae 330

agmina, quos Midea et quos uuida suggerit Arne,
Aulida qui Graeanque serunt uiridesque Plataeas,
et sulco Peteona domant, refluxumque meatu
Euripum, qua noster, habent teque, ultima tractu
Anthedon, ubi gramineo de litore Glaucus 335
poscentes inrupit aquas, iam crine genisque
caerulus, et mixtos expauit ab inguine pisces.
glandibus et torta Zephyros incidere funda
cura: Cydoneas anteibunt gaesa sagittas.
tu quoque praeclarum forma, Cephise, dedisses 340
Narcissum, sed Thespiacis iam pallet in agris
trux puer; orbata florem, pater, adluis unda.
quis tibi Phoebeas acies ueteremque reuoluat
Phocida? qui Panopen, qui Daulida, qui Cyparisson,
et ualles, Lebadia, tuas et Hyampolin acri 345
subnixam scopulo, uel qui Parnason utrumque
aut Cirrham tauris Anemorianque supinant
Coryciumque nemus propellentemque Lilaean
Cephisi glaciale caput, quo suetus anhelam
ferre sitim Python amnemque auertere ponto: 350
omnibus inmixtas cono super aspice laurus
armaque uel Tityon uel Delon habentia, uel quas
hic deus innumera laxauit caede pharetras.
Iphitus asper agit, genitor cui nuper ademptus
Naubolus Hippasides, tuus, o mitissime Lai, 355
hospes; adhuc currus securaque lora tenebam,
cum tua subter equos iacuit conuulsa cruentis
ictibus (o utinam nostro cum sanguine!) ceruix.'

dicenti maduere genae, uultumque per omnem
pallor iit, uocisque repens singultus apertum 360
intercepit iter; refouet frigentis amicum
pectus alumna senis; redit atque exile profatur:
'o mihi sollicitum decus ac suprema uoluptas,
Antigone! seras tibi demoror improbus umbras,
fors eadem scelera et caedes uisurus auitas, 365
donec te thalamis habilem integramque resignem:
hoc satis, et fessum uita dimittite, Parcae.

sed dum labor iners, quanti (nunc ecce reuiso)
transabiēre duces: Clonin atque in terga comantes
non ego Abantiadas, non te, saxosa Caryste, 370
non humiles Aegas altumque Capherea dixi.
et iam acies obtunsa negat, cunctique resistunt,
et tuus armatis iubet ecce silentia frater.’

uix ea turre senex, cum rector ab aggere coepit:
‘magnanimi reges, quibus haud parere recusem, 375
ductor et ipse, meas miles defendere Thebas,
non ego uos stimulare parem (nam liber in arma
impetus, et meritas ultro iurastis in iras),
nec laudare satis dignasque rependere grates
sufficiam (referent superi uestraeque subacto 380
hoste manus): urbem socia de gente subistis
tutari, quam non aliis populator ab oris
belliger externaue satus tellure, sed hostis
indigena adsultat, cui castra aduersa regenti
hic pater, hic genetrix, hic iunctae stirpe sorores, 385
hic erat et frater. cerne en ubicumque nefandus
excidium moliris auis: uenere uolentes
Aoniae populi, nec sum tibi, saeue, relictus.
quid uelit ista cohors et te sentire decebat:
reddere regna uetant.’ sic fatus et omnia rite 390
disponit, qui bella gerant, qui moenia seruent,
quas in fronte manus, medio quas robore sistat.
perspicuas sic luce fores et uirgea pastor
claustra leuat, dum terra recens; iubet ordine primo
ire duces, media stipantur plebe maritae; 395
ipse leuat grauidas et humum tactura parentum
ubera, succiduasque apportat matribus agnas.

interea Danai noctemque diemque sub armis,
noctem iterum rursusque diem (sic ira ferebat)
ingeminant: contempta quies, uix aut sopor illis 400
aut epulae fecere moram; properatur in hostem
more fugae. nec monstra tenent, quae plurima nectit
prodigiale canens certi fors praeuia fati.
quippe serunt diros monitus uolucresque feraeque

sideraque auersique suis decursibus amnes, 405
infestumque tonat pater et mala fulgura lucent;
terrificaeque adytis uoces clausaeque deorum
sponte fores; nunc sanguineus, nunc saxeus imber,
et subiti manes flentumque occursum auorum.
tunc et Apollineae tacuere oracula Cirrhae, 410
et non adsueta pernox ululauit Eleusin
mensibus, et templis Sparte praesaga reclusis
uidit Amyclaeos (facinus!) concurrere fratres.
Arcades insanas latrare Lycaonis umbras
nocte ferunt tacita, saeuo decurrere campo 415
Oenomaum sua Pisa refert; Acheloon utroque
deformem cornu uagus infamabat Acarnan.
Perseos effigiem maestam exorantque Mycenae
confusum Iunonis ebur; mugire potentem
Inachon agricolae, gemini maris incola narrat 420
Thebanum toto planxisse Palaemona ponto.
haec audit Pelopea phalanx, sed bellicus ardor
consiliis obstat diuum prohibetque timeri.
iam ripas, Asope, tuas Boeotaque uentum
flumina. non ausae transmittere protinus alae 425
hostilem fluuium; forte et trepidantibus ingens
descendebat agris, animos siue imbrifer arcus,
seu montana dedit nubes, seu fluminis illa
mens fuit obiectusque uado pater arma uetabat.
tunc ferus Hippomedon magno cum fragmine ripae 430
cunctantem deiecit equum, ducibusque relictis
gurgite de medio frenis suspensus et armis,
'ite uiri,' clamat, 'sic uos in moenia primus
ducere, sic clausas uoueo perfringere Thebas.'
praecipitant cuncti fluuii puduitque secutos. 435
ac uelut ignotum si quando armenta per amnem
pastor agit, stat triste pecus, procul altera tellus
omnibus et late medius timor: ast ubi ductor
taurus init fecitque uadum, tunc mollior unda,
tunc faciles saltus, uisaeque accedere ripae. 440
haud procul inde iugum tutisque accommoda castris

arua notant, unde urbem etiam turresque uidere
Sidonias; placuit sedes fidique receptus
colle per excelsum patulo quem subter aperto
arua sinu, nullique aliis a montibus instant 445
despectus; nec longa labor munimina durus
addidit: ipsa loco mirum natura fauebat.
in uallum elatae rupes deuexaque fossis
aequa et fortuito ductae quater aggere pinnae;
cetera dant ipsi, donec sol montibus omnis 450
erepsit rebusque dedit sopor otia fessis.

quis queat attonitas dictis ostendere Thebas?
urbem in conspectu belli suprema parantis
territat insomnem nox atra diemque minatur.
discurrunt muris; nil saeptum horrore sub illo, 455
nil fidum satis, inualidaeque Amphionis arces.
rumor ubique alius plures adnuntiat hostes,
maioresque timor; spectant tentoria contra
Inachia externosque suis in montibus ignes.
hi precibus questuque deos, hi Martia tela 460
belligerosque hortantur equos, hi pignora fletu
cara premunt miserique rogos et crastina mandant
funera. si tenuis demisit lumina somnus,
bella gerunt; modo lucra morae, modo taedia uitae
attonitis; lucemque timent lucemque precantur. 465
it geminum excutiens anguem et bacchatur utrisque
Tisiphone castris; fratrem huic, fratrem ingerit illi,
aut utrique patrem: procul ille penatibus imis
excitus implorat Furias oculosque reposcit.

iam gelidam Phoeben et caligantia primus 470
hauserat astra dies, cum iam tumet igne futuro
Oceanus lateque nouo Titane reclusum
aequor anhelantum radiis subsidit equorum:
ecce truces oculos sordentibus obsita canis
exangues Iocasta genas et brachia planctu 475
nigra ferens ramumque oleae cum uelleris atris
nexibus, Eumenidum uelut antiquissima, portis
egreditur magna cum maiestate malorum.

hinc atque hinc natae, melior iam sexus, aniles
 praecipitantem artus et plus quam possit euntem 480
 sustentant. uenit ante hostes, et pectore nudo
 claustra aduersa ferit tremulisque ululatibus orat
 admitti: 'reserate uiam! rogat impia belli
 mater; in his aliquod ius execrabile castris
 huic utero est.' trepidi uisam expauere manipuli 485
 auditamque magis; remeat iam missus Adrasto
 nuntius: excipiunt iussi mediosque per enses
 dant iter. illa duces ut primum aspexit Achiuos
 clamorem horrendum luctu furiata resoluit:
 'Argolici proceres, ecquis monsttrauerit hostem 490
 quem peperit? quam inueniam, mihi dicite, natum
 sub galea?' uenit attonitae Cadmeius heros
 obuius, et raptam lacrimis gaudentibus implet
 solaturque tenens, atque inter singula, 'matrem,
 matrem' iterat, nunc ipsam urguens, nunc cara sororum 495
 pectora, cum mixta fletus anus asperat ira:
 'quid molles lacrimas uenerandaque nomina fingis,
 rex Argiue, mihi? quid colla amplexibus ambis
 inuisamque teris ferrato pectore matrem?
 tune ille exilio uagus et miserabilis hospes? 500
 quem non permoueas? longae tua iussa cohortes
 expectant, multoque latus praefulgurat ense.
 a miserae matres! hunc te noctesque diesque
 deflebam? si uerba tamen monitusque tuorum
 dignaris, dum castra silent suspensaue bellum 505
 horrescit pietas, genetrix iubeoque rogoque:
 i mecum patriosque deos arsuraque saltem
 tecta uide, fratremque (quid aufers lumina?) fratrem
 adloquere et regnum iam me sub iudice posce:
 aut dabit, aut ferrum causa meliore resumes. 510
 anne times ne forte doli, et te conscia mater
 decipiam? non sic miseros fas omne penates
 effugit: uix Oedipode ducente timeres.
 nupsi equidem peperique nefas, sed diligo tales
 (a dolor) et uestros etiamnum excuso furores. 515

quodsi adeo perstas, ultro tibi, saeue, triumphum
detulimus: religa captas in terga sorores,
inice uincla mihi: grauis huc utcumque feretur
et pater. ad uestrum gemitus nunc uerto pudorem,
Inachidae, liquistis enim paruosque senesque 520
et lacrimas has quisque domi: sua credite matri
uiscera! si uobis hic paruo in tempore carus
(sitque precor), quid me, oro, decet quidue ista, Pelasgi,
ubera? ab Hyrcanis hoc Odrysiis tulissem
regibus, et si qui nostros uicere furores. 525
adnuite, aut natum complexa superstitute bello
hic moriar.' tumidas frangebant dicta cohortes,
nutantesque uirum galeas et sparsa uideres
fletibus arma piis. quales ubi tela uirosque
pectoris impulsu rabidi strauere leones, 530
protinus ira minor, gaudentque in corpore capto
securam differre famem: sic flexa Pelasgum
corda labant, ferrique auidus mansueuerat ardor.

ipse etiam ante oculos nunc matris ad oscula uersus,
nunc rudis Ismenes, nunc flebiliora precantis 535
Antigones, uariaque animum turbante procella
exciderat regnum: cupit ire, et mitis Adrastus
non uetat; hic iustae Tydeus memor occupat irae:
'me potius, socii, qui fidum Eteoclea nuper
expertus, nec frater eram, me opponite regi, 540
cuius adhuc pacem egregiam et bona foedera gesto
pectore in hoc. ubi tunc fidei pacisque sequestra
mater eras, pulchris cum me nox uestra morata est
hospitiis? nempe haec trahis ad commercia natum?
duc illum in campum, uestro qui sanguine pinguis 545
spirat adhuc pinguisque meo. tu porro sequeris,
heu nimium mitis nimiumque oblite tuorum?
scilicet infestae cum te circum undique dextrae
nudabunt enses, haec flebit et arma quiescent?
tene ille, heu demens, semel intra moenia clausum 550
possessionumque odiis Argiua in castra remittet?
ante haec excusso frondescet lancea ferro,

Inachus ante retro nosterque Achelous abibit.
sed mite adloquium et saevis pax quaeritur armis:
haec quoque castra patent, necdum meruere timeri. 555
an suspectus ego? abscedo et mea uulnera dono.
intret: et hic genetrix eadem mediaeque sorores.
finge autem pactis euictum excedere regnis,
nempe iterum reddes?' rursus mutata trahuntur
agmina consiliis: subito ceu turbine caeli 560
obuius aduersum Boreae Notus abstulit aequor.
arma iterum furiaeque placent; fera tempus Erinys
arripit et primae molitur semina pugnae.

errabant geminae Dircaea ad flumina tigres,
mite iugum, belli quondam uastator Eoi 565
currus, Erythraeis sed nuper uictor ab oris
Liber in Aonios meritas dimiserat agros.
illas turba dei seniorque ex more sacerdos
sanguinis oblitus atque Indum gramen olentes
palmito maturo uariisque ornare corymbis 570
curat et alterno maculas interligat ostro.
iamque ipsi colles, ipsa has (quid credat?) amabant
armenta, atque ausae circum mugire iuuencae;
quippe nihil grassata fames: manus obuia pascit,
exceptantque cibos fusoque horrenda supinant 575
ora mero, uaga rure quies; si quando benigno
urbem iniere gradu, domus omnis et omnia sacris
templa calent, ipsumque fides intrasse Lyaeum.
has ubi uipere tactas ter utramque flagello
Eumenis in furias animumque redire priorem 580
impulit, erumpunt non agnoscentibus agris.
ceu duo diuerso pariter si fulmina caelo
rupta cadant longumque trahant per nubila crinem:
non aliter cursu rapidae atque inmane frementes
transiliunt campos aurigamque impete uasto, 585
Amphiarae, tuum (nec defuit omen, eriles
forte is primus equos stagna ad uicina trahebat)
corripiunt; mox Taenarium (qui proximus) Idan
Aetolumque Acamanta premunt: fuga torua per agros

cornipedum, uisa donec flammatus Aconteus 590
strage uirum, cui sueta feras prosternere uirtus
(Arcas erat), densis iam fida ad moenia uersas
insequitur telis, multumque hostile resumens
ter, quater adducto per terga, per ilia telo
transigit. illae autem longo cum limite fusi 595
sanguinis ad portas utrimque extantia ducunt
spicula semianimes, gemituque imitante querelas
saucia dilectis adclinant pectora muris.
templa putes urbemque rapi facibusque nefandis
Sidonios ardere lares, sic clamor apertis 600
exoritur muris; mallent cunabula magni
Herculis aut Semeles thalamum aut penetrale ruisse
Harmoniae. cultor Baccheus Acontea Phegeus
iam uacuum telis geminoque in sanguine ouantem
comminus ense petit; subeunt Tegeaea iuuentus 605
auxilio tardi: iam supra sacra ferarum
corpora maerenti iuuenis iacet ultio Baccho.

rumpitur et Graium subito per castra tumultu
concilium; fugit exertos Iocasta per hostes
iam non ausa preces; natas ipsamque repellunt 610
qui modo tam mites, et praeceps tempore Tydeus
utitur: ‘ite age, nunc pacem sperate fidemque!
num saltem differre nefas potuitue morari,
dum genetrix dimissa redit?’ sic fatus aperto
ense uocat socios. saeuus iam clamor et irae 615
hinc atque inde calent; nullo uenit ordine bellum,
confusique duces uulgo, et neglecta regentum
imperia; una equites mixti peditumque cateruae
et rapidi currus; premit indigesta ruentes
copia, nec sese uacat ostentare nec hostem 620
noscere. sic subitis Thebana Argiuaque pubes
confluxere globis; retro uexilla tubaeque
post tergum et litui bellum inuenere secuti.
tantus ab exiguo crudescit sanguine Mauors!
uentus uti primas struit intra nubila uires, 625
lenis adhuc, frondesque et aperta cacumina gestat,

mox rapuit nemus et montes patefecit opacos.

nunc age, Pieriae, non uos longinqua, sorores,
consulimus, uestras acies uestramque referte
Aoniam; uidistis enim, dum Marte propinquo 630
horrent Tyrrhenos Heliconia plectra tumultus.

Sidonium Pterelan sonipes male fidus in armis
rumpentem frenos diuersa per agmina raptat
iam liber, sic fessa manus. uenit hasta per ambos
Tydeos: et laeuum iuueni transuerberat inguen 635
labentemque adfigit equo. fugit ille perempto
consertus domino, nec iam arma aut frena tenentem
portat adhuc: ceu nondum anima defectus utraque
cum sua Centaurus moriens in terga recumbit.
certat opus ferri: sternunt alterna furentes 640
Hippomedon Sybarin, Pylum Periphanta Menoeceus,
Parthenopaeus Ityn: Sybaris iacet ense cruento,
cuspidem trux Periphas, Itys insidiante sagitta.
Caeneos Inachii ferro Mauortius Haemon
colla rapit, cui diuiduum trans corpus hiantes 645
truncum oculi quaerunt, animus caput; arma iacentis
iam rapiebat Abas: cornu deprensus Achiua
dimisit moriens clipeum hostilemque suumque.

quis tibi Baccheos, Eunaee, relinquere cultus,
quis lucos, uetitus quibus emansisse sacerdos, 650
suasit et adsuetum Bromio mutare furorem?
quem terrere queas? clipei penetrabile textum
pallentes hederæ Nysaeaeque sarta coronant,
candida pampineo subnectitur instita pilo,
crine latent umeri, crescunt lanugine malae, 655
et rubet imbellis Tyrio subtemine thorax,
bracchiaque in manicis et pictae uincula plantae
carbasseique sinus, et fibula rasilis auro
Taenariam fulua mordebat iaspide pallam,
quam super a tergo uelox gorytos et arcus 660
pendentesque sonant aurata lynce pharetrae.
it lymphante deo media inter milia longum
uociferans: 'prohibete manus, haec omine dextro

moenia Cirrhaea monstraui Apollo iuuenca;
Parcite, in haec ultro scopuli uenere uolentes. 665
gens sacrata sumus: gener huic est Iuppiter urbi
Gradiusque socer; Bacchum haud mentimur alumnum
et magnum Alciden.' iactanti talia frustra
turbidus aera Capaneus occurrit in hasta.
qualis ubi primam leo mane cubilibus atris. 670
erexit rabiem et saeuo speculatur ab antro
aut ceruum aut nondum bellantem fronte iuencum,
it fremitu gaudens, licet arma gregesque lacesant
uenantum, praedam uidet et sua uulnera nescit:
sic tum congressu Capaneus gauisus iniquo 675
librabat magna uenturam mole cupressum.
ante tamen, 'quid femineis ululatibus,' inquit,
'terrificas, moriture, uiros? utinam ipse ueniret
cui furis! haec Tyriis cane matribus!' et simul hastam
expulit; illa uolans, ceu uis non ulla moretur 680
obuia, uix sonuit clipeo et iam terga reliquit.
arma fluunt, longisque crepat singultibus aurum,
eruptusque sinus uicit cruor. occidis audax,
occidis Aonii puer altera cura Lyaei.
marcida te fractis planxerunt Ismara thyrsis, 685
te Tmolos, te Nysa ferax Theseaque Naxos
et Thebana metu iuratus in orgia Ganges.

nec segnem Argolicae sensere Eteoclea turmae,
parcior ad ciues Polynicis inhorruit ensis.
eminet ante alios iam formidantibus arua 690
Amphiarus equis ac multo puluere uertit
campum indignantem: famulo decus addit inane
maestus et extremos obitus inlustrat Apollo.
ille etiam clipeum galeamque incendit honoro
sidere; nec tarde fratri, Gradiue, dedisti 695
ne qua manus uatem, ne quid mortalia bello
laedere tela queant: sanctum et uenerabile Diti
funus eat. talis medios aufertus in hostes
certus et ipse necis, uires fiducia leti
suggerit; inde uiro maioraque membra diesque 700

laetior et numquam tanta experientia caeli,
si uacet: auertit morti contermina Virtus.
ardet inexpleto saeui Mauortis amore
et fruitur dextra atque anima flagrante superbit.
hicne hominum casus lenire et demere Fatis 705
iura frequens? quantum subito diuersus ab illo
qui tripodas laurusque sequi, qui doctus in omni
nube salutato uolucrum cognoscere Phoebos!
innumeram ferro plebem, ceu letifer annus
aut iubar aduersi graue sideris, immolat umbris 710
ipse suis: iaculo Phlegyan iaculoque superbum
Phylea, falcato Clonin et Chremetaona curru
comminus hunc stantem metit, hunc a poplite sectum,
cuspidem non missa Chromin Iphinoumque Sagenque
intonsumque Gyan sacrumque Lycorea Phoebos 715
(inuitus: iam fraxineum demiserat hastae par robur,
et excussis apparuit infula cristis),
Alcathoum saxo, cui circum stagna Carysti
et domus et coniunx et amantes litora nati.
uixerat ille diu pauper scrutator aquarum, 720
decepit tellus, moriens hiemesque Notosque
laudat et experti meliora pericula ponti.

aspicit has longe iamdudum Asopius Hypseus
palantum strages ardetque auertere pugnam,
quamquam haud ipse minus curru Tirynthia fundens 725
robora; sed uiso praesens minor augure sanguis:
illum armis animisque cupit. prohibebat iniquo
agmine consertum cunei latus; inde superbus
exeruit patriis electum missile ripis,
ac prius: 'Aonidum diues largitor aquarum, 730
clare Giganteis etiamnum, Asope, fauillis,
da numen dextrae: rogat hoc natusque tuique
quercus alumna uadi; fas et me spernere Phoebum,
si tibi conlatus diuum sator. omnia mergam
fontibus arma tuis tristesque sine augure uittas.' 735
audierat genitor: uetat indulgere uolentem
Phoebus, et aurigam iactus detorquet in Hersen.

ille ruit: deus ipse uagis succedit habenis,
Lernaeum falso simulans Haliacmona uultu.
tunc uero ardenti non ulla obsistere temptant 740
signa, ruunt solo terrore, et uulnere citra
mors trepidis ignaua uenit, dubiumque tuenti
presserit infestos onus impuleritne iugales.
sic ubi nubiferum montis latus aut noua uentis
soluit hiems, aut uicta situ non pertulit aetas, 745
desilit horrendus campo timor, arua uirosque
limite non uno longaeuaque robora secum
praecipitans, tandemque exhaustus turbine fesso
aut uallem cauat aut medios intercipit amnes.
non secus ingentique uiro magnoque grauatus 750
temo deo nunc hoc, nunc illo in sanguine feruet.
ipse sedens telis pariterque ministrat habenis
Delius, ipse docet iactus aduersaque flectit
spicula fortunamque hastis uenientibus aufert.
sternuntur terra Melaneus pedes, Antiphus alto 755
nil defensus equo, genitusque Heliconide nympa
Aetion, caesoque infamis fratre Polites,
conatusque toris uitatam attingere Manto
Lampus: in hunc sacras Phoebus dedit ipse sagittas.
et iam cornipedes trepidi ad moribunda reflantes 760
corpora rimantur terras, omnisque per artus
sulcus et incisus altum rubet orbita membris.
hos iam ignorantes terit impius axis, at illi
uulnere semineces (nec deuitare facultas)
uenturum super ora uident; iam lubrica tabo 765
frena, nec insisti madidus dat temo, rotaeque
sanguine difficiles, et tardior ungula fossis
uisceribus: tunc ipse furens in morte relictis
spicula et e mediis extantes ossibus hastas
auellit, strident animae currumque sequuntur. 770
tandem se famulo summum confessus Apollo
'utere luce tua longamque' ait 'indue famam,
dum tibi me iunctum Mors inreuocata ueretur.
uincimur: inmites scis nulla reuoluere Parcas

stamina; uade diu populis promissa uoluptas 775
Elysiis, certe non perpessure Creontis
imperia aut uetito nudus iaciture sepulcro.
ille refert contra, et paulum respirat ab armis:
‘olim te, Cirrhaee pater, peritura sedentem
ad iuga (quis tantus miseris honor?) axe trementi 780
sensimus; instantes quonam usque morabere manes?
audio iam rapidae cursum Stygis atraque Ditis
flumina tergeminosque mali custodis hiatus.
accipe commissum capiti decus, accipe laurus,
quas Erebo deferre nefas. nunc uoce suprema, 785
si qua recessuro debetur gratia uati,
deceptum tibi, Phoebe, larem poenasque nefandae
coniugis et pulchrum nati commendo furorem.’
desiluit maerens lacrimasque auertit Apollo:
tunc uero ingemuit currusque orbique iugales. 790
non aliter caeco nocturni turbine Cauri
scit peritura ratis, cum iam damnata sororis
igne Therapnaei fugerunt carbasa fratres.

iamque recessurae paulatim horrescere terrae
summaque terga quati grauiorque efferuere puluis 795
coeperat; inferno mugit iam murmure campus.
bella putant trepidi bellique hunc esse fragorem
hortanturque gradus; alius tremor arma uirosque
mirantesque inclinat equos; iam frondea nutant
culmina, iam muri, ripisque Ismenos apertis 800
effugit; exciderunt irae, nutantia figunt
tela solo, dubiasque uagi nituntur in hastas
comminus inque uicem uiso pallore recedunt.
sic ubi nauales miscet super aequora pugnas
contempto Bellona mari, si forte benigna 805
tempestas, sibi quisque cauent, ensesque recondit
mors alia, et socii pacem fecere timores.
talis erat campo belli fluitantis imago.
siue laborantes concepto flamine terrae
uentorum rabiem et clausum eiecere furorem, 810
exedit seu putre solum carpsitque terendo

unda latens, siue hac uoluentis machina caeli
incubuit, siue omne fretum Neptunia mouit
cuspis et extremas grauius mare torsit in oras,
seu uati datus ille fragor, seu terra minata est 815
fratribus: ecce alte praeceps humus ore profundo
dissilit, inque uicem timuerunt sidera et umbrae.
illum ingens haurit specus et transire parentes
mergit equos; non arma manu, non frena remisit:
sicut erat, rectos defert in Tartara currus, 820
respexitque cadens caelum, campumque coire
ingemuit, donec leuior distantia rursus
miscuit arua tremor lucemque exclusit Auerno.

Liber Octavus

Vt subitus uates pallentibus incidit umbris
letiferasque domos orbisque arcana sepulti
rupit et armato turbauit funere manes,
horror habet cunctos, Stygiis mirantur in oris
tela et equos corpusque nouum; nec enim ignibus atris 5
conditus aut maesta niger aduentabat ab urna,
sed belli sudore calens, clipeumque cruentis
roribus et scissi respersus puluere campi.
necdum illum aut trunca lustrauerat obuia taxo
Eumenis, aut furuo Proserpina poste notarat 10
coetibus adsumptum functis; quin comminus ipsa
Fatorum deprensa colus, uisoque pauentes
augure tunc demum rumpebant stamina Parcae.
illum et securi circumspexere fragorem
Elysii, et si quos procul ulteriore barathro 15
altera nox aliisque grauat plaga caeca tenebris.
tunc regemunt pigrique lacus ustaque paludes,
umbriferaeque fremit sulcator pallidus undae
dissiluisse nouo penitus telluris hiatu
Tartara et admissos non per sua flumina manes. 20
forte sedens media regni infelicis in arce
dux Erebi populos poscebat crimina uitae,
nil hominum miserans iratusque omnibus umbris.
stant Furiae circum uariaeque ex ordine Mortes,
saeuaque multisonas exertat Poena catenas; 25
Fata serunt animas et eodem pollice damnant:
uincit opus. iuxta Minos cum fratre uerendo
iura bonus meliora monet regemque cruentum
temperat; adsistunt lacrimis atque igne tumentes
Cocytos Phlegethonque, et Styx periuria diuum 30
arguit. ille autem supera compage soluta
nec solitus sentire metus expauit oborta
sidera, iucundaque offensus luce profatur:
'quae superum labes inimicum impegit Auerno

aethera? quis rupit tenebras uitaeque silentes 35
admonet? unde minae? uter haec mihi proelia fratrum?
congregior, pereant agedum discrimina rerum.
nam cui dulce magis? magno me tertia uictum
deiecit fortuna polo, mundumque nocentem
seruo; nec iste meus: diris quin peruius astris 40
inspicitur. tumidusne meas regnator Olympi
explorat uires? habeo iam quassa Gigantum
uincula et aetherium cupidos exire sub axem
Titanas miserumque patrem: quid me otia maesta
saeuus et implacidam prohibet perferre quietem 45
amissumque odisse diem? pandam omnia regna,
si placet, et Stygio praetexam Hyperiona caelo.
Arcada nec superis (quid enim mihi nuntius ambas
itque reditque domos?) emittam et utrumque tenebo
Tyndariden. cur autem auidis Ixiona frango 50
uerticibus? cur non expectant Tantalum undae?
anne profanatum totiens Chaos hospite uiuo
perpetiar? me Pirithoi temerarius ardor
temptat et audaci Theseus iuratus amico,
me ferus Alcides tum cum custode remoto 55
ferrea Cerbereae tacuerunt limina portae;
Odrysiis etiam pudet (heu!) patuisse querelis
Tartar: uidi egomet blanda inter carmina turpes
Eumenidum lacrimas iterataque pensa Sororum;
me quoque++sed durae melior uiolentia legis. 60
ast ego uix unum, nec celsa ad sidera, furto
ausus iter Siculo rapui conubia campo:
nec licuisse ferunt; iniustaeque a Ioue leges
protinus, et sectum genetrix mihi computat annum.
sed quid ego haec? i, Tartareas ulciscere sedes, 65
Tisiphone; si quando nouis asperrima monstris,
triste, insuetum, ingens, quod nondum uiderit aether,
ede nefas, quod mirer ego inuideantque sorores.
atque adeo fratres (nostrique haec omina sunt
prima odii), fratres alterna in uulnera laeto 70
Marte ruant; sit qui rabidarum more ferarum

mandat atrox hostile caput, quique igne supremo
arceat exanimes et manibus aethera nudis
commaculet: iuuet ista ferum spectare Tonantem.
praeterea ne sola furor mea regna lacesat, 75
quaere deis qui bella ferat, qui fulminis ignes
infestumque Iouem clipeo fumante repellat.
faxo haud sit cunctis leuior metus atra mouere
Tartara frondenti quam iungere Pelion Ossae.’
dixerat: atque illi iamdudum regia tristis 80
attremis oranti, suaque et quae desuper urguet
nutabat tellus: non fortius aethera uultu
torquet et astriferos inclinat Iuppiter axes.

‘at tibi quos,’ inquit, ‘manes, qui limite praeceps
non licito per inane ruis?’ subit ille minantem 85
iam tenuis uisu, iam uanescentibus armis,
iam pedes: extincto tamen interceptus in ore
augurii perdurat honos, obscuraque fronti
uita manet, ramumque tenet morientis oliuae.
‘si licet et sanctis hic ora resolvere fas est 90
manibus, o cunctis finitor maxime rerum
(at mihi, qui quondam causas elementaque noram,
et sator), oro, minas stimulataque corda remulce,
neue ira dignare hominem et tua iura timentem;
nam nec ad Herculeos (unde haec mihi pectora?) raptus, 95
nec uenerem inlicitam (crede his insignibus) ausi
intramus Lethen: fugiat ne tristis in antrum
Cerberus, aut nostros timeat Proserpina currus.
augur Apollineis modo dilectissimus aris,
testor inane Chaos (quid enim hic iurandus Apollo?), 100
crimine non ullo subeo noua fata, nec alma
sic merui de luce rapi; scit iudicis urna
Dictaei uerumque potest deprendere Minos.
coniugis insidiis et iniquo uenditus auro
Argolicas acies (unde haec tibi turba recentum 105
umbrarum, et nostrae ueniunt quoque funera dextrae)
non ignarus ini: subito me turbine mundi
(horret adhuc animus) mediis e milibus hausit

nox tua. quae mihi mens, dum per caua uiscera terrae
 uado diu pendens et in aere uoluor operto? 110
 ei mihi! nil ex me sociis patriaeque relictum,
 uel captum Thebis; iam non Lernaea uidebo
 tecta, nec attonito saltem cinis ibo parenti.
 non tumulo, non igne miser lacrimisque meorum
 productus, toto pariter tibi funere ueni, 115
 nil istis ausurus equis; nec deprecor umbram
 accipere et tripodum iam non meminisse meorum.
 nam tibi praesagi quis iam super auguris usus,
 cum Parcae tua iussa trahant? sed pectora flectas
 et melior sis, quaeso, deis. si quando nefanda 120
 huc aderit coniunx, illi funesta reserua
 supplicia: illa tua, rector bone, dignior ira.
 accipit ille preces indignaturque moueri.
 ut leo, Massyli cum lux stetit obuia ferri,
 tunc iras, tunc arma citat; si decedit hostis, 125
 ire supra satis est uitamque relinquere uicto.
 interea uittis lauruque insignis opima
 currus et egregiis modo formidatus in armis
 luce palam, fusus nulli nullique fugatus,
 quaeritur: absistunt turmae, suspectaque tellus 130
 omnibus, infidi miles uestigia campi
 circumit, atque auidae tristis locus ille ruinae
 cessat et inferni uitatur honore sepulcri.
 nuntius hortanti diuersa in parte maniplos
 Adrasto, uix ipse ratus uidisse, Philaemon 135
 aduolat et trepidans (steterat nam forte cadenti
 proximus inspectoque miser pallebat hiatu),
 ‘uerte gradum, fuge rector’ ait ‘si Dorica saltem
 terra loco patriaeque manent, ubi liquimus, arces.
 non armis, non sanguine opus: quid inutile ferrum 140
 stringimus in Thebas? currus humus impia sorbet
 armaque bellantesque uiros; fugere ecce uidetur
 hic etiam, quo stamus, ager. uidi ipse profundae
 noctis iter ruptaque soli compage ruentem
 illum heu, praesagis quo nullus amicior astris, 145

Oecliden, frustraue manus cum uoce tetendi.
mira loquor, sulcos etiamnum, rector, equorum
fumantemque locum et spumis madida arua reliqui.
nec commune malum est: tellus agnoscit alumnos,
stat Thebana acies.' stupet haec et credere Adrastus 150
cunctatur; sed Mopsus idem trepidusque ferebat
Actor idem. iam Fama nouis terroribus audax
non unum cecidisse refert. sponte agmina retro
non expectato reuocantum more tubarum
praecipitant: sed torpet iter, falluntque ruentes 155
genua uiros; ipsique (putes sensisse) repugnant
cornipedes nulloque truces hortamine parent
nec celerare gradum nec tollere lumina terra.
fortius incursant Tyrrii, sed Vesper opacus
lunares iam ducit equos; data foedere paruo 160
maesta uiris requies et nox auctura timores.

quae tibi nunc facies postquam permissa gemendi
copia! qui fletus galeis cecidere solutis!
nil solitum fessos iuuat; abiecere madentes,
sicut erant, clipeos, nec quisquam spicula tersit, 165
nec laudauit equum, nitidae nec cassidis altam
compsit adornauitque iubam; uix magna lauare
uulnera et efflantes libet internectere plagas:
tantus ubique dolor. mensas alimentaue bello
debita nec pugnae suasit timor: omnia laudes, 170
Amphiarae, tuas fecundaue pectora ueri
commemorant lacrimis, et per tentoria sermo
unus: abisse deos dilapsaque numina castris:
'heu ubi laurigeri currus sollemnique arma
et galeae uittatus apex? hoc antra lacusque 175
Castalii tripodumque fides? sic gratus Apollo?
quis mihi sidereos lapsus mentemque sinistri
fulguris, aut caesis saliat quod numen in extis,
quando iter, unde morae, quae saeuis utilis armis,
quae pacem magis hora uelit? quis iam omne futurum 180
proferet, aut cum quo uolucres mea fata loquentur?
hos quoque bellorum casus nobisque tibiue

praescieras et (quanta sacro sub pectore uirtus!)
uenisti tamen et miseris comes additus armis.
et cum te tellus fatalisque hora uocaret, 185
tu Tyrias acies aduersaque signa uacasti
sternere; tunc etiam media de morte timendum
hostibus infestaque abeuntem uidimus hasta.
et nunc te quis casus habet? poterisne reuerti
sedibus a Stygiis altaque erumpere terra? 190
anne sedes hilaris iuxta, tua numina, Parcas
et uice concordis discis uentura docesque?
an tibi felices lucos miseratus Auerni
rektor et Elysias dedit inseruare uolucres?
quidquid es, aeternus Phoebo dolor et noua clades 195
semper eris mutisque diu plorabere Delphis.
hic Tenedon Chrysenque dies partuque ligatum
Delon et intonsi claudet penetralia Branchi,
nec Clarias hac luce fores Didymaeae quisquam
limina nec Lyciam supplex consultor adibit. 200
quin et cornigeri uatis nemus atque Molosso
quercus anhela Ioui Troianaque Thymbra tacebit.
ipsi amnes ipsaeque uolent arescere laurus,
ipse nihil certum sagis clangoribus aether
praecinet, et nulla ferientur ab alite nubes. 205
iamque erit ille dies quo te quoque conscia fatis
templa colant reddatque tuus responsa sacerdos.’
taliam fatidico peragunt sollemnia regi,
ceu flammas ac dona rogo tristesque rependant
exequias mollique animam tellure reponant. 210
fracta dehinc cunctis auersaque pectora bello.
sic fortes Minyas subito cum funere Tiphys
destituit, non arma sequi, non ferre uidetur
remus aquas, ipsique minus iam ducere uenti.
iam fessis gemitu paulatim corda leuabat 215
exhaustus sermone dolor; nox addita curas
obruit et facilis lacrimis inrepere somnus.

at non Sidoniam diuersa in parte per urbem
nox eadem: uario producunt sidera ludo

ante domos intraque, ipsaeque ad moenia marcent 220
excubiae; gemina aera sonant Idaeaeque terga
et moderata sonum uario spiramine buxus.
tunc dulces superos atque omne ex ordine alumnum
numen ubique sacri resonant paeanes, ubique
serta coronatumque merum. nunc funera rident 225
auguris ignari, contraque in tempore certant
Tiresian laudare suum; nunc facta reuoluunt
maiorum ueteresque canunt ab origine Thebas:
hi mare Sidonium manibusque attrita Tonantis
cornua et ingenti sulcatum Nerea tauro, 230
hi Cadmum lassamque bouem fetosque cruenti
Martis agros, alii Tyriam reptantia saxa
ad chelyn et duras animantem Amphiona cautes,
hi grauidam Semelen, illi Cythereia laudant
conubia et multa deductam lampade fratrum 235
Harmoniam: nullis deest sua fabula mensis.
ceu modo gemmiferum thyrsos populatus Hydaspen
Eoasque domos nigri uexilla triumphii
Liber et ignotos populis ostenderet Indos.

tunc primum ad coetus sociaeque ad foedera mensae 240
semper inaspectum diraque in sede latentem
Oedipoden exisse ferunt uultuque sereno
canitiem nigram squalore et sordida fusis
ora comis laxasse manu sociumque benignos
adfatus et abacta prius solacia passum, 245
quin hausisse dapes insiccatumque cruorem
deiecisse genis. cunctos auditque refertque,
qui Ditem et Furias tantum et si quando regentem
Antigonen maestis solitus pulsare querelis.
causa latet. non hunc Tyrii fors prospera belli, 250
tantum bella iuuant; natum hortaturque probatque
nec uicisse uelit; sed primos comminus enses
et sceleris tacito rimatur semina uoto.
inde epulae dulces ignotaque gaudia uultu.
qualis post longae Phineus ieiunia poenae, 255
nil stridere domi uolucresque ut sensit abactas

(necdum tota fides), hilaris mensasque torosque
nec turbata feris tractauit pocula pennis.

cetera Graiorum curis armisque iacebat
fessa cohors; alto castrorum ex aggere Adrastus 260
laetificos tenui captabat corde tumultus,
quamquam aeger senio, sed agit miseranda potestas
inuigilare malis. illum aereus undique clamor
Thebanique urunt sonitus, et amara lacessit
tibia, tum nimio uoces marcore superbae 265
incertaeque faces et iam male peruigil ignis.
sic ubi per fluctus uno ratis obruta somno
conticuit, tantique maris secura iuuentus
mandauere animas: solus stat puppe magister
peruigil inscriptaque deus qui nauigat alno. 270

tempus erat iunctos cum iam soror ignea Phoebe
sensit equos penitusque cauam sub luce parata
Oceani mugire domum, seseque uagantem
colligit et leuiter moto fugat astra flagello:
concilium rex triste uocat, quaeruntque gementes 275
quis tripodas successor agat, quo prodita laurus
transeat atque orbum uittae decus. haud mora, cuncti
insignem fama sanctoque Melampode cretum
Thiodamanta uolunt, quicum ipse arcana deorum
partiri et uisas uni sociare solebat 280
Amphiaraus aues, tantaeque haud inuidus artis
gaudebat dici similem iuxtaque secundum.
illum ingens confundit honos inopinaque turbat
gloria et oblatas frondes summissus adorat
seque oneri negat esse parem, cogique meretur. 285
sicut Achaemenius solium gentesque paternas
excepit si forte puer, cui uiuere patrem
tutius, incerta formidine gaudia librat
an fidi proceres, ne pugnet uulgus habenis,
cui latus Euphratae, cui Caspia limina mandet; 290
sumere tunc arcus ipsumque onerare ueretur
patris equum uisusque sibi nec scepra capaci
sustentare manu nec adhuc implere tiaran.

atque is ubi intorto signatus uellere crinem
 conuenitque deis, hilari per castra tumultu 295
 uadit ouans ac, prima sui documenta, sacerdos
 Tellurem placare parat: nec futile maestis
 id uisum Danaïs. geminas ergo ilicet aras
 arboribus uiuis et adulto caespite texi
 imperat, innumerosque deae, sua munera, flores 300
 et cumulos frugum et quidquid nouat impiger annus
 addit et intacto spargens altaria lacte
 incipit: 'o hominum diuumque aeterna creatrix,
 quae fluuios siluasque animarum et semina mundo
 cuncta Prometheasque manus Pyrrhaeaeque saxa 305
 gignis, et impastis quae prima alimenta dedisti
 mutastique uiris, quae pontum ambisque uehisque:
 te penes et pecudum gens mitis et ira ferarum
 et uolucrum requies; firmum atque immobile mundi
 robur inoccidui, te uelox machina caeli 310
 aere pendentem uacuo, te currus uterque
 circumit, o rerum media indiuisaque magnis
 fratribus! ergo simul tot gentibus alma, tot altis
 urbibus ac populis, subterque ac desuper una
 sufficis, astriferumque domos Atlanta supernas 315
 ferre laborantem nullo uehis ipsa labore:
 nos tantum portare negas? nos, diua, grauaris?
 quod, precor, ignari luimus scelus? an quia plebes
 externa Inachiis huc aduentamus ab oris?
 omne homini natale solum, nec te, optima, saeuo 320
 tamque humili populos deceat distinguere fine
 undique ubique tuos; maneat communis et arma
 hinc atque inde feras; liceat, precor, ordine belli
 pugnaces efflare animas et reddere caelo.
 ne rape tam subitis spirantia corpora bustis, 325
 ne propera: ueniamus enim, quo limite cuncti,
 qua licet ire uia; tantum exorata Pelasgis
 siste leuem campum, celeres neu praecipe Parcas.
 at tu, care deis, quem non manus ulla nec enses
 Sidonii, sed magna sinu Natura soluto, 330

ceu te Cirrhaeo meritum tumularet hiatu,
sic amplexa coit, hilaris des, oro, precatus
nosse tuos, caeloque et uera monentibus aris
concilies, et quae populis proferre parabas,
me doceas: tibi sacra feram praesaga, tuique 335
numinis interpres te Phoebos absente uocabo.
ille mihi Delo Cirrhaque potentior omni,
quo ruis, ille adytis melior locus.' haec ubi dicta,
nigrantes terra pecudes obscuraque mergit
armenta, ac uiuis cumulos undantis harenae 340
aggerat et uati mortis simulacra rependit.

taliam apud Graios, cum iam Mauortia contra
cornua, iam saeuos fragor aereus excitat enses.
addit acerba sonum Teumesi e uertice crinem
incutiens acuitque tubas et sibila miscet 345
Tisiphone: stupet insolito clangore Cithaeron
marcidus et turres carmen non tale secutae.
iam trepidas Bellona fores armataque pulsat
limina, iam multo laxantur cardine Thebae.
turbat eques pedites, currus properantibus obstant, 350
ceu Danaï post terga premant: sic omnibus alae
artantur portis septemque excursibus haerent.
Ogygiis it sorte Creon, Eteoclea mittunt
Neistae, celsas Homoloidas occupat Haemon,
Hypsea Proetiae, celsum fudere Dryanta 355
Electrae, quatit Hypsistas manus Eurymedontis,
culmina magnanimus stipat Dircaea Menoeceus.
qualis ubi auersi secretus pabula caeli
Nilus et Eoas magno bibit ore pruinas,
scindit fontis opes septemque patentibus aruis 360
in mare fert hiemes; penitus cessere fugatae
Nereides dulcique timent occurrere ponto.

tristis at inde gradum tarde mouet Inacha pubes,
praecipue Eleae Lacedaemoniaeque cohortes
et Pylii; subitum nam Thiodamanta sequuntur 365
augure fraudati, necdum accessere regenti.
nec tua te, princeps tripodum, sola agmina quaerunt:

cuncta phalanx sibi deesse putat; minor ille per alas
septimus extat apex. liquido uelut aethere nubes
inuida Parrhasiis unum si detrahat astris, 370
truncus honor Plaustri, nec idem riget igne reciso
axis, et incerti numerant sua sidera nautae.

sed iam bella uocant: alias noua suggere uires,
Calliope, maiorque chelyn mihi tendat Apollo.
fatalem populis ultro poscentibus horam 375
admouet atra dies, Stygiisque emissa tenebris
Mors fruitur caelo bellatoremque uolando
campum operit nigroque uiros inuitat hiatu,
nil uulgare legens, sed quae dignissima uita
funera, praecipuos annis animisque, cruento 380
ungue notat: iamque in miseros pensum omne Sororum
scinditur, et Furiae rapuerunt licia Parcis.
stat medius campis etiamnum cuspide sicca
Bellipotens, iamque hos clipeum, iam uertit ad illos
arma ciens aboletque domos, conubia, natos. 385
pellitur et patriae et, qui mente nouissimus exit,
lucis amor; tenet in capulis hastisque paratas
ira manus, animusque ultra thoracas anhelus
conatur, galeaeque tremunt horrore comarum.
quid mirum caluisse uiros? flammantur in hostem 390
cornipedes niueoque rigant sola putria nimbo,
corpora ceu mixti dominis irasque sedentum
induerint: sic frena terunt, sic proelia poscunt
hinnitu tolluntque armos equitesque supinant.

iamque ruunt, primusque uirum concurrere puluis 395
incipit, et spatii utrimque aequalibus acti
aduentant mediumque uident decrescere campum.
iam clipeus clipeis, umbone repellitur umbo,
ense minax ensis, pede pes et cuspide cuspis:
sic obnixa acies pariter suspiria fumant, 400
admotaque nitent aliena in casside cristae.
pulcher adhuc belli uultus: stant uertice coni,
plena armenta uiris, nulli sine praeside currus,
arma loco, splendent clipei pharetraeque decorae

cingulaque et nondum deforme cruoribus aurum. 405
at postquam rabies et uitae prodiga uirtus
emisere animos, non tanta cadentibus Haedis
aeriam Rhodopen solida niue uerberat Arctos,
nec fragor Ausoniae tantus cum Iuppiter omni
arce tonat, tanta quatitur nec grandine Syrtis 410
cum Libyae Boreas Italos niger attulit imbres.
excludere diem telis, stant ferrea caelo
nubila, nec iaculis artatus sufficit aer.
hi pereunt missis, illi redeuntibus hastis,
concurrunt per inane sudes et mutua perdunt 415
uulnera, concurrunt hastae, stridentia funda
saxa pluunt, uolucres imitantur fulgura glandes
et formidandae non una morte sagittae.
nec locus ad terram telis: in corpora ferrum
omne cadit; saepe ignari perimuntque caduntque 420
casus agit uirtutis opus: nunc turba recedit,
nunc premit, ac uicibus tellurem amittit et aufert.
ut uentis nimbisque minax cum soluit habenas
Iuppiter alternoque adfligit turbine mundum:
stat caeli diuersa acies, nunc fortior Austri, 425
nunc Aquilonis hiems, donec pugnante procella
aut nimiis hic uicit aquis, aut ille sereno.
principium pugnae turmas Asopius Hypseus
Oebalias (namque hae magnum et gentile tumentes
Euboicum duris rumpunt umbonibus agmen) 430
reppulit erepto cunei ductore Menalca.
hic et mente Lacon, crudi torrentis alumnus
(nec turpauit auos), hastam ultra pectus euntem,
ne pudor in tergo, per et ossa et uiscera retro
extrahit atque hosti dextra labente remittit 435
sanguineam: dilecta genis morientis oberrant
Taygeta et pugnae laudataque uerbera matri.
Phaedimon Iasiden arcu Dircaeus Amyntas
destinat: heu celeres Parcae! iam palpitat aruis
Phaedimus, et certi nondum tacet arcus Amyntae. 440
abstulit ex umero dextram Calydonius Agreus

Phegeos: illa suum terra tenet improba ferrum
 et mouet; extimuit sparsa inter tela iacentem
 praegrediens truncamque tamen percussit Acoetes.
 Iphin atrox Acamas, Argum ferus impulit Hypseus, 445
 strauit Abanta Pheres, diuersaque uulnera flentes
 Iphis eques, pedes Argus, Abas auriga iacebant.
 Inachidae gemini geminos e sanguine Cadmi
 occultos galeis (saeua ignorantia belli)
 perculerant ferro; sed dum spolia omnia caesis 450
 eripiunt, uidere nefas, et maestus uterque
 respicit ad fratrem pariterque errasse queruntur.
 cultor Ion Pisae cultorem Daphnea Cirrhae
 turbatis prostrauit equis: hunc laudat ab alto
 Iuppiter, hunc tardus frustra miseratur Apollo. 455
 ingentes Fortuna uiros inlustrat utrimque
 sanguine in aduerso: Danaos Cadmeius Haemon
 sternit agitque, furens sequitur Tyria agmina Tydeus;
 Pallas huic praesens, illum Tirynthius implet.
 qualiter hiberni summis duo montibus amnes 460
 franguntur geminaeque cadunt in plana ruina:
 contendisse putes uter arua arbustaque tollat
 altius aut superet pontes; et cum una receptas
 confundit iam uallis aquas, sibi quisque superbus
 ire cupit, pontoque negant descendere mixti. 465
 ibat fumiferam quatiens Onchestius Idas
 lampada per medios turbabatque agmina Graium,
 igne uiam rumpens; magno quem comminus ictu
 Tydeos hasta feri dispulsa casside fixit.
 ille ingens in terga iacet, stat fronte superstes 470
 lancea, conlapsae ueniunt in tempora flammae.
 prosequitur Tydeus: 'saeuos ne dixeris Argos,
 igne tuo, Thebane, (rogum concedimus) arde!'
 inde, uelut primo tigris gauisa cruore
 per totum cupit ire pecus, sic Aona saxo, 475
 ense Pholum, Chromin ense, duos Helicaonas hasta
 transigit, Aegaeae Veneris quod Maera sacerdos
 ediderat prohibente dea; uos praeda cruenti

Tydeos, it saeuas etiamnum mater ad aras.

nec minus Herculeum contra uagus Haemona ducit 480
sanguis: inexploto rapitur per milia ferro,
nunc tumidae Calydonis opes, nunc torua Pylenes
agmina, nunc maestae fundens Pleuronis alumnos,
donec in Olenium fessa iam cuspidē Buten
incidit. hunc turmis obuersum et abire uetantem 485
adgreditur; puer ille, puer malasque comamque
integer, ignaro cui tunc Thebana bipennis
in galeam librata uenit: finduntur utroque
tempora diuiduique cadunt in brachia crines,
et non hoc metuens inopino limine uita 490
exiuit. tunc flauum Hypanin flauumque Politen
(ille genas Phoebō, crinem hic pascebat Iaccho:
saeuus uterque deus), uictis Hyperenora iungit
conuersumque fuga Damasum; sed lapsa per armos
hasta uiri trans pectus abit parmamque tenenti 495
excutit et summa fugiens in cuspidē portat.

sterneret aduersos etiamnum Ismenius Haemon
Inachidas (nam tela regit uiresque ministrat
Amphitryoniades), saeuum sed Tydea contra
Pallas agit. iamque aduerso uenere fauore 500
comminus, et placido prior haec Tirynthius ore:
‘fida soror, quāenam hunc belli caligine nobis
congressum fortuna tulit? num regia Iuno
hoc molita nefas? citius me fulmina contra
(infandum!) ruere et magno bellare parenti 505
aspiciat. genus huic++sed mitto agnoscere, quando
tu diuersa foues, nec si ipsum comminus Hyllum
Tydeos hasta tui Stygioque ex orbe remissum
Amphitryona petat; teneo aeternumque tenebo
quantum haec, diua, manus, quotiens sudauerit aegis 510
ista mihi, duris famulus dum casibus omnes
lustrō uagus terras; ipsa (heu!) comes inuia mecum
Tartara, nī superos Acheron excluderet, isses.
tu patriam caelumque mihi++quis tanta relatu
aequet? habet totas, si mens excindere, Thebas. 515

cedo equidem ueniamque precor.' sic orsus abibat.
Pallada mulcet honos: rediit ardore remisso
uultus et erecti sederunt pectoris angues.

sensit abisse deum; leuius Cadmeius Haemon
tela rotat nulloque manum cognoscit in ictu. 520
tunc magis atque magis uires animusque recedunt,
nec pudor ire retro; cedentem Acheloius heros
impetit, et librans uni sibi missile telum
derexit iactus summae qua margine parmae
ima sedet galea et iuguli uitalia lucent. 525
nec frustrata manus, mortemque inuenerat hasta;
sed prohibet paulumque umeri libare sinistri
praebuit et merito parcit Tritonia fratri.
ille tamen nec stare loco nec comminus ire
amplius aut uultus audet perferre cruenti 530
Tydeos, aegra animo uis ac fiducia cessit.
qualis saetigeram Lucana cuspide frontem
strictus aper, penitus cui non infossa cerebro
uulnera, nec felix dextrae tenor, in latus iras
frangit et expertae iam non uenit obuius hastae. 535

ecce ducem turmae certa indignatus in hostem
spicula felici Prothoum torquere lacerto,
turbidus Oenides una duo corpora pinu,
cornipedemque equitemque, ferit: ruit ille ruentem
in Prothoum lapsasque manu quaerentis habenas 540
in uultus galeam clipeumque in pectora calcat,
saucius extremo donec cum sanguine frenos
respuat et iuncta domino ceruice recumbit.
sic ulmus uitisque, duplex iactura colenti,
Gaurano de monte cadunt, sed maestior ulmus 545
quaerit utrumque nemus, nec tam sua bracchia labens
quam gemit adsuetas inuitaque proterit uuas.

sumpserat in Danaos Heliconius arma Corymbus,
ante comes Musis, Stygii cui conscia pensi
ipsa diu positus letum praedixerat astris 550
Vranie. cupit ille tamen pugnasque uirosque,
forsitan ut caneret; longa iacet ipse canendus

laude, sed amissum mutae fleuere Sorores.

pactus Agenoream primis Atys ibat ab annis
Ismenen, Tyrii iuuenis non Aduena belli. 555
quamuis Cirrha domus, soceros nec tristibus actis
auersatus erat; sponsam quin castus amanti
squalor et indigni commendat gratia luctus.
ipse quoque egregius, nec pectora uirginis illi
diuersa, inque uicem, sineret fortuna, placebant. 560
bella uetant taedas, iuuenique hinc maior in hostes
ira; ruit primis inmixtus et agmina Lernae
nunc pedes ense uago, prensis nunc celsus habenis,
ceu spectetur, agit. triplici uelauerat ostro
surgentes etiamnum umeros et leuia mater 565
pectora; tunc auro phaleras auroque sagittas
cingulaque et manicas, ne coniuge uilior iret,
presserat et mixtum cono crispauerat aurum.
talibus (heu!) fidens uocat ultro in proelia Graios.
ac prima in faciles grassatus cuspide turmas 570
arma refert sociis et in agmina fida peracta
caede reddit. sic Hyrcana leo Caspius umbra
nudus adhuc nulloque iubae flauentis honore
terribilis magnique etiamnum sanguinis insons,
haud procul a stabulis captat custode remoto 575
segne pecus teneraque famem consumit in agna.
mox ignotum armis ac solo corpore mensus
Tydea non timuit, fragilique lacescere telo
saepius infrendentem aliis aliosque sequentem
ausus erat. tandem inualidos Aetolus ad ictus 580
forte refert oculos et formidabile ridens,
'iamdudum uideo, magnum cupis, improbe, leti
nomen' ait; simul audacem non ense nec hasta
dignatus leuiter digitis imbelli solutis
abiecit iaculum: latebras tamen inguinis alte 585
missile, ceu totis intortum uiribus, hausit.
praeterit haud dubium fati et spoliare superbit
Oenides. 'neque enim has Marti aut tibi, bellica Pallas,
exuias figemus' ait 'procul arceat ipsum

ferre pudor; uix, si bellum comitata relictis 590
Deipyle thalamis, illi inludenda tulissem.’
sic ait, et belli maiora ad praemia mente
ducitur: innumeris ueluti leo forte potitus
caedibus imbelles uitulos mollesque iuuenas
transmittit: magno furor est in sanguine mergi 595
nec nisi regnantis ceruice recumbere tauri.
at non semianimi clamore Menoecea lapsus
fallit Atys: praeuertit equos curruque citato
desilit: instabat pubes Tegeaea iacenti,
nec prohibent Tyrii. ‘pudeat, Cadmea iuuentus, 600
terrigenas mentita patres! quo tenditis,’ inquit,
‘degeneres? meliusne iacet pro sanguine nostro
hospes Atys? tantum hospes adhuc et coniugis ultor
infelix nondum iste suae; nos pignora tanta
prodimus?’ insurgunt iusto firmata pudore 605
agmina, cuique suae rediere in pectora curae.

interea thalami secreta in parte sorores,
par aliud morum miserique innoxia proles
Oedipodae, uarias miscent sermone querelas.
nec mala quae iuxta, sed longa ab origine fati, 610
haec matris taedas, oculos ast illa paternos,
altera regnantem, profugum gemit altera fratrem,
bella ambae. grauis hinc miseri cunctatio uoti:
nutat utroque timor, quemnam hoc certamine uictum,
quem uicisse uelint: tacite praeponderat exul. 615
sic Pandioniae repetunt ubi fida uolucres
hospitia atque larem bruma pulsante relictum
stantque super nidos ueterisque exordia fati
adnarrant tectis: it truncum ac flebile murmur;
uerba putant, uoxque illa tamen non dissona uerbis. 620
atque ibi post lacrimas et longa silentia rursus
incohat Ismene: ‘quisnam hic mortalibus error?
quae decepta fides? curam inuigilare quieti
claraque per somnos animi simulacra reuerti?
ecce ego, quae thalamos, nec si pax alta maneret, 625
tractarem sensu, (pudet heu!) conubia uidi

nocte, soror; sponsum unde mihi sopor attulit amens
uix notum uisu? semel his in sedibus illum,
dum mea nescio quo spondentur foedera pacto,
respexi non sponte, soror. turbata repente 630
omnia cernebam, subitusque intercidit ignis,
meque sequebatur rabido clamore reposita
mater Atyn. quaenam haec dubiae praesagia cladis?
nec timeo, dum tuta domus milesque recedat
Doricus et tumidos liceat componere fratres.’ 635
taliter nectebant, subito cum pigra tumultu
expauit domus, et multo sudore receptus
fertur Atys, seruans animam iam sanguine nullo,
cui manus in plaga, dependet languida ceruix
exterior clipeo, crinesque a fronte supini. 640
prima uidet caramque tremens Iocasta uocabat
Ismenen: namque hoc solum moribunda precatur
uox generi, solum hoc gelidis iam nomen inerrat
faucibus. exclamant famulae, tollebat in ora
uirgo manus, tenuit saeuus pudor; attamen ire 645
cogitur, indulget summum hoc Iocasta iacenti
ostenditque offertque. quater iam morte sub ipsa
ad nomen uisus defectaque fortiter ora
sustulit; illam unam neglecto lumine caeli
aspicit et uultu non exatiatur amato. 650
tunc quia nec genetrix iuxta positusque beata
morte pater, sponsae munus miserabile tradunt
declinare genas; ibi demum teste remoto
fassa pios gemitus lacrimasque in lumina fudit.
dumque ea per Thebas, aliis serpentibus ardens 655
et face mutata bellum integrabat Enyo.
arma uolunt, primos ueluti modo comminus ictus
sustulerint omnisque etiamnum luceat ensis.
eminet Oenides: quamuis et harundine certa
Parthenopaeus agat, morientumque ora furenti 660
Hippomedon proculcet equo, Capaneaque pinus
iam procul Aoniis uolet agnoscenda cateruis,
Tydeos illa dies, illum fugiuntque tremuntque

clamantem: 'quo terga datis? licet ecce peremptos
ulcisci socios maestamque rependere noctem. 665
ille ego inexpletis solus qui caedibus hausi
quingenta animas: totidem, totidem heia gregatim
ferre manus! nulline patres, nulline iacentum
unanimi fratres? quae tanta obliuio luctas?
quam pudet Inachias contentum abiisse Mycenae! 670
hinc super Thebis? haec robora regis? ubi autem
egregius dux ille mihi?' simul ordine laeuo
ipsum exhortantem cuneos capitisque superbi
insignem fulgore uidet; nec segnius ardens
occurrit, niueo quam flammiger ales olo 675
inminet et magna trepidum circumligat umbra.
tunc prior: 'Aoniae rex o iustissime gentis,
imus in arma palam tandemque ostendimus enses,
an noctem et solitas placet expectare tenebras?'
ille nihil contra, sed stridula cornu in hostem 680
it referens mandata ducis, quam prouidus heros
iam iam in fine uiae percussam obliquat, et ipse
telum ingens auide et quanto non ante lacerto
impulit. ibat atrox finem positura duello
lancea (conuertere oculos utrimque fauentes 685
Sidonii Graiue dei), crudelis Erinys
obstat et infando differt Eteoclea fratri,
cuspis in armigerum Phlegyan peccauit. ibi ingens
pugna uirum, stricto nam saeuior inruit ense
Aetolus, retroque datum Thebana tegebant 690
arma ducem. sic densa lupum iam nocte sub atra
arcet ab appresso pastorum turba iuuenco;
improbis erigitur contra, nec cura uetantes
impetere: illum, illum, semel in quem uenerat, urget.
non secus obiectas acies turbamque minorem 695
dissimulat transitque manu; tamen ora Thoantis,
pectora Deilochi, Clonii latus, ilia torui
perforat Hippotadae; truncis sua membra remittit
interdum galeasque rotat per nubila plenas.
et iam corporibus sese spoliisque cadentum 700

clauserat; unum acies circum consumitur, unum
omnia tela uouent: summis haec ossibus haerent,
pars frustrata cadunt, partem Tritonia uellit,
multa rigent clipeo. densis iam consitus hastis
ferratum quatit umbo nemus, tergoque fatiscit 705
atque umeris gentilis aper; nusquam ardua coni
gloria, quique apicem toruae Gradius habebat
cassidis, haud laetum domino ruit omen: inusta
temporibus nuda aera sedent, circumque sonori
uertice percusso uoluuntur in arma molares. 710
iam cruor in galea, iam saucia proluit ater
pectora permixtus sudore et sanguine torrens.
respicit hortantes socios et Pallada fidam
longius opposita celantem lumina parma:
ibat enim magnum lacrimis inflectere patrem. 715

ecce secat Zephyros ingentem fraxinus iram
fortunamque ferens; teli non eminet auctor:
Astacides Melanippus erat, nec prodidit ipse
et uellet latuisse manum, sed gaudia turmae
monstrabant trepidum; nam flexus in ilia Tydeus 720
summissum latus et clipei laxauerat orbem.
clamorem Aonii miscent gemitumque Pelasgi,
obiectantque manus indignantemque tuentur.
ille per oppositos longe rimatus amarum
Astaciden, totis animae se cogit in ictum 725
reliquiis telumque iacit quod proximus Hopleus
praebuerat: perit expressus conamine sanguis.
tunc tristes socii cupidum bellare (quis ardor!)
et poscentem hastas mediaque in morte negantem
expirare trahunt, summique in margine campi 730
effultum gemina latera inclinantia parma
ponunt, ac saeui rediturum ad proelia Martis
promittunt flentes. sed et ipse recedere caelum
ingentesque animos extremo frigore labi
sensit, et innixus terrae, ‘miserescite,’ clamat, 735
‘Inachidae: non ossa precor referantur ut Argos
Aetolumue larem; nec enim mihi cura supremi

funeris: odi artus fragilemque hunc corporis usum,
desertorem animi. caput, o caput, o mihi si quis
apportet, Melanippe, tuum! nam uolueris aruis, 740
fido equidem, nec me uirtus suprema fefellit.
i, precor, Atrai si quid tibi sanguinis umquam,
Hippomedon, uade, o primis puer inclute bellis
Arcas, et Argolicae Capaneu iam maxime turmae.'

moti omnes, sed primus abit primusque repertum 745
Astaciden medio Capaneus e puluere tollit
spirantem laeuaque super ceruice reportat,
terga cruentantem concussi uulneris unda:
qualis ab Arcadio rediit Tirynthius antro
captiumque suem clamantibus intulit Argis. 750

erigitur Tydeus uultuque occurrit et amens
laetitiaque iraque, ut singultantia uidit
ora trahique oculos seseque agnouit in illo,
imperat abscisum porgi, laeuaque receptum
spectat atrox hostile caput, gliscitque tepentis 755
lumina torua uidens et adhuc dubitantia figi.
infelix contentus erat: plus exigit ultrix
Tisiphone; iamque inflexo Tritonia patre
uenerat et misero decus immortale ferebat,
atque illum effracti perfusum tabe cerebri 760
aspicit et uiuo scelerantem sanguine fauces
(nec comites auferre ualent): stetit aspera Gorgon
crinibus emissis rectique ante ora cerastae
uelauere deam; fugit auersata iacentem,
nec prius astra subit quam mystica lampas et insons 765
Ilissos multa purgauit lumina lympha.

Liber Nonus

Asperat Aonios rabies audita cruenti
Tydeos; ipsi etiam minus ingemuere iacentem
Inachidae, culpantque uirum et rupisse queruntur
fas odii; quin te, diuum implacidissime, quamquam
praecipuum tunc caedis opus, Gradiue, furebas, 5
offensum uirtute ferunt, nec comminus ipsum
ora sed et trepidos alio torsisse iugales.
ergo profanatum Melanippi funus acerbo
uulnere non aliis ultum Cadmeia pubes
insurgunt stimulis, quam si turbata sepulcris 10
ossa patrum monstisque datae crudelibus urnae.
accendit rex ipse super: 'quisquamne Pelasgis
mitis adhuc hominemque gerit? iam morsibus uncis
(pro furor! usque adeo tela exatiauimus?) artus
dilacerant. nonne Hyrcanis bellare putatis 15
tigribus, aut saeuos Libyae contra ire leones?
et nunc ille iacet (pulchra o solacia leti!)
ore tenens hostile caput, dulcique nefandus
inmoritur tabo; nos ferrum inmite facesque:
illis nuda odia, et feritas iam non eget armis. 20
sic pergant rabidi claraque hac laude fruantur,
dum uideas haec, summe pater. sed enim hiscere campos
conquesti terraeque fugam mirantur; an istos
uel sua portet humus?' magno sic fatus agebat
procursu fremituque uiros, furor omnibus idem 25
Tydeos inuisi spoliis raptoque potiri
corpore. non aliter subtexunt astra cateruae
incestarum auium, longe quibus aura nocentem
aera desertasque tulit sine funere mortes;
illo auidae cum uoce ruunt, sonat arduus aether 30
plausibus, et caelo uolucres cessere minores.

Fama per Aonium rapido uaga murmure campum
spargitur in turmas (solito perniciosior index
cum lugenda refert), donec, cui maxima fando

damna uehit, trepidas lapsa est Polynicis ad aures. 35
deriguit iuuenis lacrimaeque haesere paratae
et cunctata fides: nimium nam cognita uirtus
Oenidae credi letum suadetque uetatque.
sed postquam haud dubio clades auctore reperta est,
nox oculos mentemque rapit; tum sanguine fixo 40
membra simul, simul arma ruunt: madet ardua fletu
iam galea atque ocreae clipeum excepere cadentem.
it maestus genua aegra trahens hastamque sequentem,
uulneribus ceu mille grauis totosque per artus
saucius: absistunt socii monstrantque gementes. 45
tandem ille abiectis, uix quae portauerat, armis
nudus in egregii uacuum iam corpus amici
procidit et tali lacrimas cum uoce profudit:
‘hasne tibi, armorum spes o suprema meorum,
Oenide, grates, haec praemia digna rependi, 50
funus ut inuisa Cadmi tellure iaceres
sospite me? nunc exul ego aeternumque fugatus,
quando alius misero ac melior mihi frater ademptus.
nec iam sortitus ueteres regnique nocentis
periurum diadema peto: quo gaudia tanti 55
empta mihi aut sceptrum quod non tua dextera tradet?
ite, uiri, solumque fero me linquite fratri:
nil opus arma ultra temptare et perdere mortes;
ite, precor; quid iam dabitis mihi denique maius?
Tydea consumpsi! quamam hoc ego morte piabo? 60
o socer, o Argi! et primae bona iurgia noctis
alternaeque manus et, longi pignus amoris,
ira breuis! non me ense tuo tunc, maxime Tydeu,
(et poteras) nostri mactatum in limine Adrasti!
quin etiam Thebas me propter et impia fratris 65
tectata libens, unde haud alius remeasset, adisti,
ceu tibimet sceptrum et proprios laturus honores.
iam Telamona pium, iam Thesea fama tacebat.
qualis et ecce iaces! quae primum uulnera mirer?
quis tuus hic, quis ab hoste cruor? quae te agmina quiue 70
innumeri strauere globi? (num fallor?) et ipse

inuidit pater et tota Mars impulit hasta.
sic ait, et maerens etiamnum lubrica tabo
ora uiri terget lacrimis dextraque reponit.
‘tune meos hostes hucusque exosus, et ultra 75
sospes ego?’ exuerat uagina turbidus ensem
aptabatque neci: comites tenuere, socerque
castigat bellicue uices ac fata reuoluens
solatur tumidum, longeque a corpore caro
paulatim, unde dolor letique animosa uoluntas, 80
amouet ac tacite ferrum inter uerba reponit.
ducitur amisso qualis consorte laborum
deserit inceptum media inter iugera sulcum
taurus iners colloque iugum deforme remisso
parte trahit, partem lacrimans sustentat arator. 85
ecce autem hortatus Eteoclis et arma secuti,
lecta manus, iuuenes, quos nec Tritonia bello,
nec prope conlata spreuisset cuspide Mauors,
aduentant; contra, conlecta ut pectora parmae
fixerat atque hastam longe protenderat, haeret 90
arduus Hippomedon: ceu fluctibus obuia rupes,
cui neque de caelo metus et fracta aequora cedunt,
stat cunctis inmota minis, fugit ipse rigentem
pontus et ex alto miserae nouere carinae.
tunc prior Aonides (ualidam simul eligit hastam): 95
‘non pudet hos manes, haec infamantia bellum
funera dis coram et caelo inspectante tueri?
scilicet egregius sudor memorandaque uirtus
hanc tumulare feram, ne non maerentibus Argos
exequiis lacrimandus eat mollique feretro 100
infandam eiectans saniem! dimittite curam.
nullae illum uolucres, nulla impia monstra nec ipse,
si demus, pius ignis edat.’ nec plura, sed ingens
intorquet iaculum, duro quod in aere moratum
transmissumque tamen clipei stetit orbe secundo. 105
inde Pheres acerque Lycus; sed cassa Pheretis
hasta redit, Lycus excelso terrore comantem
perstringit galeam: conuulsae cuspide longe

diffugere iubae patuitque ingloria cassis.
ipse nec ire retro, nec in obuia concitus arma 110
exilit, inque eadem sese uestigia semper
obuersus cunctis profert recipitque, nec umquam
longius indulget dextrae motusque per omnes
corpus amat, corpus seruans circumque supraque
uertitur. imbellem non sic amplexa iuuencum 115
infestante lupo tunc primum feta tuetur
mater et ancipiti circumfert cornua gyro;
ipsa nihil metuens sexusque oblita minoris
spumat et ingentes imitatur femina tauros.
tandem intermissa iaculantum nube potestas 120
reddere tela fuit; iamque et Sicyonius Alcon
uenerat auxilio, Pisaeaque praepetis Idae
turma subit cuneumque replent. his laetus in hostes
Lernaeam iacit ipse trabem; uolat illa sagittis
aequa fuga mediumque nihil cunctata Politen 125
transabit et iuncti clipeum cauat improba Mopsi.
Phocea tum Cydona Tanagraeumque Phalantum
atque Erycem, hunc retro conuersum et tela petentem,
dum spes nulla necis, crinito a uertice figit:
faucibus ille cauis hastam non ore receptam 130
miratur moriens, pariterque et murmure plenus
sanguis et expulsi salierunt cuspide dentes.
ausus erat furto dextram iniectare Leonteus,
pone uiros atque arma latens, positumque trahebat
prenso crine caput: uidit, quamquam undique crebrae, 135
Hippomedon, ante ora minae, saeuoque proteruam
abstulit ense manum; simul increpat: 'hanc tibi Tydeus,
Tydeus ipse rapit; post et confecta uirorum
fata time magnosque miser fuge tangere manes!'
ter Cadmea phalanx toruum abduxere cadauer, 140
ter retrahunt Danai: Siculi uelut anxia puppis
seditione maris nequiquam obstante magistro
errat et auerso redit in uestigia uelo.

non ibi Sidoniae ualuissent pellere coepto
Hippomedonta manus, non illum impacta mouerent 145

tormenta oppositum, formidatique superbis
turribus impulsus temptato umbone redissent.
sed memor Elysii regis noxasque recensens
Tydeos in medios astu subit impia campos
Tisiphone: sensere acies subitusque cucurrit 150
sudor equis sudorque uiris, quamquam ore remisso
Inachium fingeat Halyn, nusquam impius ignis
uerberaque, et iussi tenuere silentia crines.
arma gerit iuxtaque feri latus Hippomedontis
blanda genas uocemque uenit, tamen ille loquentis 155
extimuit uultus admiraturque timorem.
illa autem lacrimans, 'tu nunc' ait 'inclute, frustra
exanimes socios inhumataque corpora Graium
(scilicet is nobis metus, aut iam cura sepulcri?)
protegis; ipse manu Tyria tibi captus Adrastus 160
raptatur, teque ante alios, te uoce manuque
inuocat; heu qualem lapsare in sanguine uidi,
exutum canos lacero diademate crines!
nec procul hinc, aduerte oculos: ubi plurimus ille
pulis, ubi ille globus.' paulum stetit anxius heros 165
librabatque metus; premit aspera uirgo: 'quid haeres?
imus? an hi retinent manes, et uilior ille
qui superest?' miserum sociis opus et sua mandat
proelia et unanimi uadit desertor amici,
respiens tamen et reuocent si forte paratus. 170
inde legens turbata trucis uestigia diuae
huc illuc frustra ruit auius, impia donec
Eumenis ex oculis reiecta caerula parma
fugit et innumeri galeam rupere cerastae.
aspicit infelix discussa nube quietos 175
Inachidas currumque nihil metuentis Adrasti.

et Tyrii iam corpus habent, iam gaudia magnae
testantur uoces, uictorque ululatus aderrat
auribus occultoque ferit praecordia luctu.
ducitur hostili (pro dura potentia fati!) 180
Tydeus ille solo, modo cui Thebana sequenti
agmina, siue gradus seu frena effunderet, ingens

limes utrimque datus; nusquam arma, manusque quiescunt;
nulla uiri feritas: iuuat ora rigentia leto
et formidatos impune lacessere uultus. 185
hic amor, hoc una timidi fortesque sequuntur
nobilitare manus, infectaque sanguine tela
coniugibus seruant paruisque ostendere natis.
sic ubi Maura diu populatum rura leonem,
quem propter clausique greges uigilantque magistri, 190
pastorum lassae debellauere cohortes:
gaudet ager, magno subeunt clamore coloni,
praecerpuntque iubas inmaniaque ora recludunt
damnaque commemorant, seu iam sub culmine fixus
excubat, antiquo seu pendet gloria luco. 195

at ferus Hippomedon quamquam iam sentit inane
auxilium et seram raptō pro corpore pugnam,
it tamen et caecum rotat inreuocabilis ensem,
uix socios hostesque, nihil dum tardet euntem,
secernens; sed caede noua iam lubrica tellus 200
armaque seminecesque uiri currusque soluti
impediunt laeuumque femur, quod cuspidē fixum
regis Echionii, sed dissimulauerat ardens,
siue ibi nescierat. maestum uidet Hoplea tandem;
Tydeos hic magni fidus comes et modo frustra 205
armiger alipedem prona ceruice tenebat
fatorum ignarum domini solumque frementem
quod uacet inque acies audentior ille pedestres.
hunc aspernantem tumido noua pondera tergo
(unam quippe manum domitis expertus ab annis) 210
corripit adfaturque: 'quid o noua fata recusas,
infelix sonipes? nusquam tibi dulce superbi
regis onus; non iam Aetolo satiabere campo
gaudentemque iubam per stagna Acheloia solues.
quod superest, caros, i, saltem ulciscere manes 215
aut sequere; extorrem neu tu quoque laeseris umbram
captius tumidumque equitem post Tydea portes.'
audisse accensumque putes: hoc fulmine raptum
abstulit et similes minus indignatur habenas.

semifer aeria talis Centaurus ab Ossa 220

desilit in ualles: ipsum nemora alta tremescunt,
campus equum. trepidi cursu glomerantur anhelio
Labdacidae, premit ille super, necopinaque ferro
colla metens linquit truncos post terga cadentes.

uentum erat ad fluuium; solito tunc plenior alueo 225

(signa mali) magna se mole Ismenos agebat.

illa brevis requies, illo timida agmina lassam
de campis egere fugam; stupet hospita belli
unda uiros claraque armorum incenditur umbra.
insiluere uadis, magnoque fragore solutus 230

agger et aduersae latuerunt puluere ripae.

ille quoque hostiles saltu maiore per undas
inruit attonitis (longum dimittere habenas)
sicut erat, tantum uiridi defixa parumper
caespite populeo commendat spicula trunco. 235

tunc uero exanimes tradunt rapientibus ultro
arma uadis: alii demissa casside, quantum
tendere conatus animae ualuere sub undis,
turpe latent; multi fluuium transmittere nando
adgressi, sed uincla tenent laterique repugnat 240
balteus et madidus deducit pectora thorax.

qualis caeruleis tumido sub gurgite terror
piscibus, arcani quotiens deuexa profund
scrutantem delphina uident; fugit omnis in imos
turba lacus uiridesque metu stipantur in algas; 245
nec prius emersi quam summa per aequora flexus
emicet et uisis malit certare carinis:

talis agit sparsos, mediisque in fluctibus heros
frena manu pariter, pariter regit arma, pedumque
remigio sustentat equum; consuetaque campo 250
fluctuat et mersas leuis ungula quaerit harenas.

sternit Iona Chromis, Chromin Antiphos, Antiphon Hypseus,
Hypseus Astyagen euasurumque relicto
amne Linum, ni fata uetent et stamine primo
ablatum tellure mori. premit agmina Thebes 255
Hippomedon, turbat Danaos Asopius Hypseus:

amnis utrumque timet, crasso uada mutat uterque
sanguine, et e fluuio neutri fatale reuerti.
iam laceri pronis uoluuntur cursibus artus
oraque et abscisae redeunt in pectora dextrae, 260
spicula iam clipeosque leues arcusque remissos
unda uehit, galeasque uetant descendere cristae:
summa uagis late sternuntur flumina telis,
ima uiris; illic luctantur corpora leto,
efflantesque animas retro premit obuius amnis. 265

flumineam rapiente uado puer Argipus ulmum
prenderat, insignes umeros ferus ense Menoeceus
amputat; ille cadens, nondum conamine adempto,
truncus in excelsis spectat sua bracchia ramis.
Hypseos hasta Sagen ingenti uulnere mersit, 270
ille manet fundo, rediit pro corpore sanguis.
desiluit ripis fratrem rapturus Agenor,
heu miser et tenuit, sed saucius ille leuantem
degrauat amplexu: poterat resolutus Agenor
emersisse uadis, piguit sine fratre reuerti. 275
surgentem dextra Capetum uulnusque minantem
sorbebat rapidus nodato gurgite uertex;
iam uultu, iam crine latet, iam dextera nusquam,
ultimus abruptas ensis descendit in undas.
mille modis leti miseros mors una fatigat. 280
induit a tergo Mycalesia cuspis Agyrten;
respexit: nusquam auctor erat, sed concita tractu
gurgitis effugiens inuenerat hasta cruorem.

figitur et ualidos sonipes Aetolus in armos
exiitque alte ui mortis et aera pendens 285
uerberat; haud tamen est turbatus fulmine ductor,
sed miseratur equum magnoque ex uulnere telum
exuit ipse gemens et sponte remisit habenas.
inde pedes repetit pugnas gressuque manuque
certior, et segnem Nomium fortemque Mimanta 290
Thisbaeumque Lichan Anthedoniumque Lycetum
continuat ferro geminisque e fratribus unum
Thespiaden; eadem poscenti fata Panemo:

‘uiue superstes’ ait ‘diraeque ad moenia Thebes
solus abi miseros non decepture parentes. 295
di bene quod pugnas rapidum deiecit in amnem
sanguinea Bellona manu: trahit unda timentes
gurgite gentili, nuda nec flebilis umbra
stridebit uestros Tydeus inhumatus ad ignes;
ibitis aequoreis crudelia pabula monstis, 300
illum terra uehit suaque in primordia soluet.’
sic premit aduersos et acerbat uulnera dictis;
ac nunc ense furit, nunc tela natantia captans
ingerit: innuptae comitem Therona Dianae,
ruricolamque Gyan cum fluctuago Ergino, 305
intonsumque Hersen, contemptoremque profundi
Crethea nimbosam qui saepe Caphereos arcem
Euboicasque hiemes parua transfugerat alno++
quid non fata queant? traiectus pectora ferro
uoluitur in fluctus, heu cuius naufragus undae! 310
te quoque sublimi tranantem flumina curru,
dum socios, Pharsale, petis, resupinat ademptis
Dorica cuspis equis; illos uiolentia saeui
gurgitis infelixque iugi concordia mergit.

nunc age, quis tumidis magnum expugnauerit undis 315
Hippomedonta labor, cur ipse excitus in arma
Ismenos, doctae nosse indulgete sorores:
uestrum opus ire retro et senium depellere famae.
gaudebat Fauno nymphaque Ismenide natus
maternis bellare tener Crenaeus in undis, 320
Crenaeus, cui prima dies in gurgite fido
et natale uadum et uirides cunabula ripae.
ergo ratus nihil Elysias ibi posse Sorores,
laetus adulantem nunc hoc, nunc margine ab illo
transit aum, leuat unda gradus, seu defluus ille, 325
siue obliquus eat; nec cum subit obuius ullas
stagna dedere moras pariterque reuertitur amnis.
non Anthedonii tegit hospitis inguina pontus
blandior, aestiuo nec se magis aequore Triton
exerit, aut carae festinus ad oscula matris 330

cum remeat tardumque ferit delphina Palaemon.
 arma decent umeros, clipeusque insignis et auro
 lucidus Aoniae caelatur origine gentis.
 Sidonis hic blandi per candida terga iuueni,
 iam secura maris, teneris iam cornua palmis 335
 non tenet, extremis adludunt aequora plantis;
 ire putes clipeo fluctusque secare iuuentum.
 adiuuat unda fidem pelago, nec discolor amnis.
 tunc audax pariter telis et uoce proterua
 Hippomedonta petit: 'non haec fecunda ueneno 340
 Lerna, nec Herculeis haustae serpentibus undae:
 sacrum amnem, sacrum (et miser experiere!) deumque
 altrices inrumpis aquas.' nihil ille, sed ibat
 comminus; opposuit cumulo se densior amnis
 tardauitque manum; uulnus tamen illa retentum 345
 pertulit atque animae tota in penetralia sedit.
 horruit unda nefas, siluae fleuistis utraeque,
 et grauiora cauae sonuerunt murmura ripae.
 ultimus ille sonus moribundo emersit ab ore,
 'mater!', in hanc miseri ceciderunt flumina uocem. 350
 at genetrix coetu glaucarum cincta sororum
 protinus icta malo uitrea de ualle solutis
 exiluit furibunda comis, ac uerbere crebro
 oraue pectoraque et uiridem scidit horrida uestem.
 utque erupit aquis iterumque iterumque trementi 355
 ingeminat 'Crenae' sono: nusquam ille, sed index
 desuper (a miserae nimium noscenda parenti!)
 parma natat; iacet ipse procul, qua mixta supremum
 Ismenon primi mutant confinia ponti.
 fluctuagam sic saepe domum madidosque penates 360
 Alcione deserta gemit, cum pignora saeuus
 Auster et argentes rapuit Thetis inuida nidos.
 mergitur orba iterum, penitusque occulta sub undis
 limite non uno, liquidum qua subter eunti
 lucet iter, miseri nequiquam funera nati 365
 uestigat plangitque tamen; saepe horridus amnis
 obstat, et obducto caligant sanguine uisus.

illa tamen praeceps in tela offendit et enses
scrutaturque manu galeas et prona reclinat
corpora; nec ponto summota intrabat amaram 370
Dorida, possessum donec iam fluctibus altis
Nereidum miserata cohors ad pectora matris
impulit. illa manu ceu uiuum amplexa reportat
insternitque toris riparum atque umida siccatur
mollibus ora comis, atque haec ululatibus addit: 375
‘hoc tibi semidei munus tribuere parentes
nec mortalis auus? sic nostro in gurgite regnas?
mitior heu misero discors alienaque tellus,
mitior unda maris, quae iuxta flumina corpus
rettulit et miseram uisa expectasse parentem. 380
hinc mei uultus? haec torui lumina patris?
hi crines undantis aui? tu nobile quondam
undarum nemorumque decus, quo sospite maior
diua et Nympharum longe regina ferebar.
heu ubinam ille frequens modo circa limina matris 385
ambitus orantesque tibi seruire Napaeae?
cur nunc te, melius saeuo mansura profundo,
amplexu misero tumulis, Crenaeae, reporto
non mihi? nec tantae pudet heu miseretque ruinae,
dure parens? quae te alta et ineluctabilis imo 390
condidit amne palus, quo nec tam cruda nepotis
funera nec nostri ualeant perrumpere planctus?
ecce furit iactatque tuo se in gurgite maior
Hippomedon, illum ripaeque undaeque tremescunt,
illius impulsu nostrum bibit unda cruorem: 395
tu piger et trucibus facilis seruire Pelasgis.
ad cineres saltem supremaque iusta tuorum
saeue ueni non hic solum accensure nepotem.’
his miscet planctus multumque indigna cruentatur
pectora, caeruleae referunt lamenta sorores: 400
qualiter Isthmiaco nondum Nereida portu
Leucothean planxisse ferunt, dum pectore anhelato
frigidus in matrem saeuum mare respuit infans.
at pater arcano residens Ismenos in antro,

unde aurae nubesque bibunt atque imbrifer arcus 405
pascitur et Tyrios melior uenit annus in agros,
ut lamenta procul, quamquam obstrepat ipse, nouosque
accepit natae gemitus, leuat aspera musco
colla grauemque gelu crinem, ceciditque soluta
pinus adulta manu dimissaque uoluitur urna. 410
illum per ripas annoso scrupea limo
ora exertantem siluae fluuiique minores
mirantur: tantus tumido de gurgite surgit,
spumosum attollens apicem lapsuque sonoro
pectora caeruleae riuis manantia barbae. 415
obuia cognatos gemitus casumque nepotis
Nympharum docet una patrem monstratque cruentum
auctorem dextramque premit: stetit arduus alto
amne, manuque genas et nexa uirentibus uluis
cornua concutiens sic turbidus ore profundo 420
incipit: 'huncne mihi, superum regnator, honorem
quod totiens hospesque tuis et conscius actis
(nec memorare timor) falsa nunc improba fronte
cornua, nunc uetitam currus disiungere Phoeben,
dotaesque rogos deceptaque fulmina uidi 425
praecipuosque alui natorum? an uilis et illis
gratia? ad hunc certe repsit Tirynthius amnem,
hac tibi flagrantem Bromium restinximus unda.
aspice quas fluuio caedes, quae funera portem
continuis telis alioque adopertus aceruo. 430
omne uadum belli series tenet, omnis anhelat
unda nefas, subterque animae supraque recentes
errant et geminas iungunt caligine ripas.
ille ego clamatus sacris ululatibus amnis,
qui molles thyrsos Baccheaque cornua puro 435
fonte lauare feror, stipatus caedibus artas
in freta quaero uias; non Strymonos impia tanto
stagna cruore natant, non spumifer altius Hebrus
Gradiuo bellante rubet. nec te admonet altrix
unda tuasque manus, iam pridem oblite parentum 440
Liber? an Eous melius pacatur Hydaspes?

at tu, qui tumidus spoliis et sanguine gaudes
insontis pueri, non hoc ex amne potentem
Inachon aut saeuas uictor reuehere Mycenae,
ni mortalis ego et tibi ductus ab aethere sanguis.' 445

sic ait infrendens et sponte furentibus undis
signa dedit: mittit gelidus montana Cithaeron
auxilia antiquasque niues et pabula brumae
ire iubet; frater tacitas Asopos eunti
conciliat uires et hiulcis flumina uenis 450
suggerit. ipse cauae scrutatur uiscera terrae
stagnaue torpentesque lacus pigrasque paludes
excudit, atque auidos tollens ad sidera uultus
umentes nebulas exhaurit et aera siccant.
iamque super ripas utroque extantior ibat 455
aggere, iam medium modo qui superauerat amnem
Hippomedon, intactus aquis umerosque manusque,
miratur creuisse uadem seseque minorem.
hinc atque hinc tumidi fluctus animosaeque surgit
tempestas instar pelagi, cum Pliadas haurit 460
aut nigrum trepidis impingit Oriona nautis.
non secus aequoreo iactat Teumesius amnis
Hippomedonta salo, semperque umbone sinistro
tollitur et clipeum nigrante superuenit aestu
spumeus adsultans fractaque refunditur unda 465
et cumulo maiore reedit; nec mole liquenti
contentus carpit putres seruantia ripas
arbusta annosasque trabes eiectaque fundo
saxa rotat. stat pugna impar amnisque uirique,
indignante deo; nec enim dat terga nec ullis 470
frangitur ille minis, uenientesque obuius undas
intrat et obiecta dispellit flumina parma.
stat terra fugiente gradus, et poplite tenso
lubrica saxa tenet, genibusque obnixus et haerens
subruta fallaci seruat uestigia limo, 475
sic etiam increpitans: 'unde haec, Ismene, repente
ira tibi? quoue has traxisti gurgite uires,
imbelli famulate deo solumque cruorem

femineis experte choris, cum Bacchica mugit
buxus et insanae maculant trieterida matres?’ 480
dixerat; atque illi sese deus obtulit ultro
turbidus imbre genas et nube natantis harenae,
nec saeuit dictis, trunca sed pectora quercu
ter quater oppositi, quantum ira deusque ualebat,
impulit adsurgens: tandem uestigia flexit 485
excussumque manu tegimen, conuersaque lente
terga refert. instant undae sequiturque labantem
amnis ouans; nec non saxis et grandine ferri
desuper infestant Tyrii geminoque repellunt
aggere. quid faciat bellis obsessus et undis? 490
nec fuga iam misero, nec magnae copia mortis.

 stabat gramineae producta crepidine ripae
undarum ac terrae dubio, sed amicior undis,
fraxinus ingentique uadum possederat umbra.
huius opem (nam qua terras inuaderet?) unca 495
arripuit dextra: nec pertulit illa trahentem,
sed maiore super, quam stabat, pondere uicta
soluitur et, qua stagna subit radice quibusque
arentem mordebat humum dimissa, superne
iniecit sese trepido ripamque, nec ultra 500
passa uirum subitae uallauit ponte ruinae.
huc undae coeunt, et ineluctabile caeno
uerticibusque cauis sedit crescitque barathrum.
iamque umeros, iam colla ducis sinuosa uorago
circumit: hic demum uictus suprema fateri 505
exclamat: ‘fluuione (pudet!), Mars inclute, merges
hanc animam, segnesque lacus et stagna subibo
ceu pecoris custos, subiti torrentis iniquis
interceptus aquis? adeone occumbere ferro
non merui?’ tandem precibus commota Tonantem 510
Iuno subit: ‘quonam miseros, sator inclute diuum,
Inachidas, quonam usque premes? iam Pallas et odit
Tydea, iam rapto tacuerunt augure Delphi:
en meus Hippomedon, cui gentis origo Mycenae
Argolicique lares numenque ante omnia Iuno 515

(sic ego fida meis?), pelagi crudelibus ibit
 praeda feris? certe tumulos supremaque uictis
 busta dabas: ubi Cecropiae post proelia flammae,
 Theseos ignis ubi est?' non spernit coniugis aequas
 ille preces, leuiterque oculos ad moenia Cadmi 520
 rettulit, et uiso sederunt flumina nutu.
 illius exangues umeri et perfossa patescunt
 pectora: ceu uentis alte cum elata resedit
 tempestas, surgunt scopuli quaesitaque nautis
 terra, et ab infestis descendunt aequora saxis. 525
 quid ripas tenuisse iuuat? premit undique nimbo
 telorum Phoenissa cohors, nec tegmina membris
 ulla, omnisque patet leto; tunc uulnera manant,
 quique sub amne diu stupuit cruor, aere nudo
 soluitur et tenues uenarum laxat hiatus, 530
 incertique labant undarum e frigore gressus.
 procumbit, Getico qualis procumbit in Haemo
 seu Boreae furiis putri seu robore quercus
 caelo mixta comas, ingentemque aera laxat:
 illam nutantem nemus et mons ipse tremescit 535
 qua tellure cadat, quas obruat ordine siluas.
 non tamen aut ense galeamue audacia cuiquam
 tangere; uix credunt oculis ingentiaque horrent
 funera et astrictis accedunt comminus armis.
 tandem adiit Hypseus capulumque in morte tenenti 540
 extrahit et toruos laxauit casside uultus;
 itque per Aonios alte mucrone corusco
 suspensam ostentans galeam et clamore superbit:
 'hic ferus Hippomedon, hic formidabilis ultor
 Tydeos infandi debellatorque cruenti 545
 gurgitis!' agnouit longe pressitque dolorem
 magnanimus Capaneus, telumque inmane lacerto
 hortatur librans: 'ades o mihi, dextera, tantum
 tu praesens bellis et ineuitabile numen,
 te uoco, te solam superum contemptor adoro.' 550
 sic ait, et uoti sese facit ipse potentem.
 it tremibunda abies clipeum per et aerea texta

loricae tandemque animam sub pectore magno
deprendit: ruit haud alio quam celsa fragore
turris, ubi innumeros penitus quassata per ictus 555
labitur effractamque aperit uictoribus urbem.
cui super adsistens, 'non infitiamur honorem
mortis' ait 'refer huc oculos, ego uulneris auctor;
laetus abi multumque aliis iactantior umbris!'
tunc ensem galeamque rapit clipeumque reuellit 560
Hypseos; exanimumque tenens super Hippomedonta,
'accipe' ait 'simul hostiles, dux magne, tuasque
exuuias, ueniet cineri decus et suus ordo
manibus; interea iustos dum reddimus ignes,
hoc ultor Capaneus operit tua membra sepulcro.' 565
sic anceps dura belli uice mutua Grais
Sidoniisque simul nectebat uulnera Mauors:
hic ferus Hippomedon, illic non segnior Hypseus
fletur, et alterni praebent solacia luctus.

tristibus interea somnum turbata figuris 570
torua sagittiferi mater Tegeatis ephebi,
crine dato passim plantisque ex more solutis,
ante diem gelidas ibat Ladonis ad undas
purgatura malum fluuio uiuente soporem.
namque per attonitas curarum pondere noctes 575
saepe et delapsas adytis, quas ipsa dicarat,
exuuias, seque ignotis errare sepulcris
extorrem nemorum Dryadumque a plebe fugatam,
saepe nouos nati bello rediisse triumphos,
armaque et alipedem notum comitesque uidebat, 580
numquam ipsum, nunc ex umeris fluxisse pharetras,
effigiesque suas simulacraque nota cremari.
praecipuos sed enim illa metus portendere uisa est
nox miserae totoque erexit pectore matrem.
nota per Arcadias felici robore siluas 585
quercus erat, Triuiiae quam desacrauerat ipsa
electam turba nemorum numenque colendo
fecerat: hic arcus et fessa reponere tela,
armaque curua suum et uacuorum terga leonum

figere et ingentes aequantia cornua siluas. 590
uix ramis locus, agrestes adeo omnia cingunt
exuuiae, et uiridem ferri nitor impedit umbram.
hanc, ut forte iugis longo defessa redibat
uenatu, modo rapta ferox Erymanthidos ursae
ora ferens, multo proscissam uulnere cernit 595
deposuisse comam et rorantes sanguine ramos
expirare solo; quaerenti nympa cruentas
Maenadas atque hostem dixit saeuisse Lyaeum.
dum gemit et planctu circumdat pectus inani,
abrupere oculi noctem maestoque cubili 600
exilit et falsos quaerit per lumina fletus.

ergo ut in amne nefas merso ter crine piauit
uerbaque sollicitas matrum solantia curas
addidit, armatae ruit ad delubra Dianae
rore sub Eoo, notasque ex ordine siluas 605
et quercum gauisa uidet. tunc limine diuae
astitit et tali nequiquam uoce precatur:
‘uirgo potens nemorum, cuius non mollia signa
militiamque trucem sexum indignata frequento
more nihil Graio (nec te gens aspera ritu 610
Colchis Amazoniaeue magis coluere cateruae):
si mihi non umquam thiasi ludusue proteruae
noctis et, inuiso quamuis temerata cubili,
non tamen aut teretes thyrsos aut mollia gessi
pensa, sed in tetricis et post conubia lustris, 615
sic quoque uenatrix animumque innupta remansi,
nec mihi secretis culpam occultare sub antris
cura, sed ostendi prolem posuique tremementem
ante tuos confessa pedes, nec degener ille
sanguinis inque meos reptauit protinus arcus, 620
tela puer lacrimis et prima uoce poposcit:
hunc mihi (quid trepidae noctes somnusque minantur?),
hunc, precor, audaci qui nunc ad proelia uoto
heu nimium tibi fisus abit, da uisere belli
uictorem, uel, si ampla peto, da uisere tantum! 625
[si non uictorem des uictum cernere saltem!] 625a

hic sudet tuaque arma ferat. preme dira malorum
signa; quid in nostris, nemoralis Delia, siluis
Maenades hostiles Thebanaque numina regnant?
ei mihi! cur penitus (simque augur cassa futuri!),
cur penitus magnoque interpretor omine quercum? 630
quod si uera sopor miserae praesagia mittit,
per te maternos, mitis Dictynna, labores
fratrumque decus, cunctis hunc fige sagittis
infelicem uterum; miserae sine funera matris
audiat ille prior!' dixit, fletuque soluto 635
aspicit et niueae saxum maduisse Dianae.

illam diua ferox etiamnum in limine sacro
expositam et gelidas uerrentem crinibus aras
linquit, et in mediis frondentem Maenalon astris
exuperat gressu saltumque ad moenia Cadmi 640
destinat, interior caeli qua semita lucet
dis tantum, et cunctas iuxta uidet ardua terras.
iamque fere medium Parnasi frondea praeter
colla tenebat iter, cum fratrem in nube corusca
aspicit haud solito uisu: remeabat ab armis 645
maestus Echioniis, demersi funera lugens
auguris. inrubit caeli plaga sidere mixto,
occursuque sacro pariter iubar arsit utrimque,
et coiere arcus et respondere pharetrae.
ille prior: 'scio, Labdacias, germana, cohortes 650
et nimium fortes ausum petis Arcada pugnas.
fida rogat genetrix: utinam indulgere precanti
fata darent! en ipse mei (pudet!) inritus arma
cultoris frondesque sacras ad inania uidi
Tartara et in memet uersos descendere uultus; 655
nec tenui currus terraeque abrupta coegi,
saeuus ego inmeritusque coli. lugentia cernis
antra, soror, mutasque domos: haec sola rependo
dona pio comiti; nec tu peritura mouere
auxilia et maestos in uanum perge labores. 660
finis adest iuueni, non hoc mutabile fatum,
nec te de dubiis fraterna oracula fallunt.'

‘sed decus extremum misero,’ confusa uicissim
uirgo refert, ‘duraeque licet solacia morti
quaerere, nec fugiet poenas quicumque nefandam 665
insontis pueri scelerarit sanguine dextram
impius, et nostris fas sit saeuire sagittis.’
sic effata mouet gressus libandaque fratri
parcius ora tulit, Thebasque infesta petiuit.

at pugna ereptis maior crudescit utrimque 670
regibus, alternosque ciet uindicta furores.
Hypseos hinc turmae desolatumque magistro
agmen, at hinc grauius fremit Hippomedontis adempti
orba cohors; praebent obnixa corpora ferro,
idem ardor rabidis externum haurire cruorem 675
ac fudisse suum, nec se uestigia mutant:
stat cuneo defixa acies, hostique cruento
dant animas et terga negant: cum lapsa per auras
uertice Dircae uelox Latonia montis
astitit; agnoscunt colles notamque tremescit 680
silua deam, saeuus ubi quondam exerta sagittis
fecundam lasso Nioben consumpserat arcu.

illum acies inter coepta iam caede superbum
nescius armorum et primas tunc passus habenas
uenator raptabat equus, quem discolor ambit 685
tigris et auratis aduerberat unguibus armos.
colla sedent nodis, et castigata iubarum
libertas, nemorisque notae sub pectore primo
iactantur niueo lunata monilia dente.
ipse bis Oebalio saturatam murice pallam 690
lucentesque auro tunicas (hoc neuerat unum
mater opus) tenui collectus in ilia uincolo,
cornipedis laeue clipeum demiserat armo,
ense grauis nimio: tereti iuuat aurea morsu
fibula pendentis circum latera aspera cinctus, 695
uaginaeque sonum tremulumque audire pharetrae
murmur et a cono missas in terga catenas;
interdum cristas hilaris iactare comantes
et pictum gemmis galeae iubar. ast ubi pugna

cassis anhela calet, resoluta uertice nudus 700
exoritur: tunc dulce comae radiisque trementes
dulce nitent uisus et, quas dolet ipse morari,
nondum mutatae rosea lanugine malae.
nec formae sibi laude placet multumque seueris
asperat ora minis, sed frontis seruat honorem 705
ira decens. dat sponte locum Thebana iuuentus,
natorum memores, intentaque tela retorquent;
sed premit et saeuas miserantibus ingerit hastas.
illum et Sidoniae iuga per Teumesia Nymphae
bellantem atque ipso sudore et puluere gratum 710
laudant, et tacito ducunt suspiria uoto.

taliam cernenti mitis subit alta Dianae
corda dolor, fletuque genas uiolata, 'quod,' inquit
'nunc tibi, quod leti quaeram dea fida propinqui
effugium? haecne ultro properasti in proelia, saeue 715
ac miserande puer? cruda heu festinaque uirtus
suasit et hortatrix animosi gloria leti!
scilicet angustum iamdudum urgentibus annis
Maenaliū tibi, parue, nemus, perque antra ferarum
uix tutae sine matre uiae, siluestria cuius 720
nondum tela procax arcumque implere ualebas.
et nunc illa meas ingentem plangit ad aras
inuidiam surdasque fores et limina lassat:
tu dulces lituos ululataque proelia gaudes
felix et miserae tantum moriture parenti.' 725
ne tamen extremo frustra morientis honori
adfuerit, uenit in medios caligine fulua
saepa globos, primumque leues furata sagittas
audacis tergo pueri caelestibus implet
goryton telis, quorum sine sanguine nullum 730
decidit; ambrosio tunc spargit membra liquore,
spargit equum, ne quo uioletur uulnere corpus
ante necem, cantusque sacros et conscia miscet
murmura, secretis quae Colchidas ipsa sub antris
nocte docet monstratque feras quaerentibus herbas. 735
tunc uero exerto circumuolat igneus arcu

nec se mente regit, patriae matrisque suique
inmemor, et nimium caelestibus utitur armis:
ut leo, cui paruo mater Gaetula cruentos
suggerit ipsa cibos, cum primum crescere sensit 740
colla iubis toruusque nouos respexit ad ungues,
indignatur ali, tandemque effusus apertos
liber amat campos et nescit in antra reuerti.

quos, age, Parrhasio sternis, puer improbe, cornu?
prima Tanagraeum turbauit harundo Coroebum 745
extremo galeae primoque in margine parmae
angusta transmissa uia: stat faucibus unda
sanguinis, et sacri facies rubet igne ueneni.
saeuius Eurytion, cui luminis orbe sinistro
callida tergemini acies se condidit uncis. 750
ille trahens oculo plenam labente sagittam
ibat in auctorem: sed diuum fortia quid non
tela queant? alio geminatum lumine uulnus
expleuit tenebras; sequitur tamen improbus hostem,
qua meminit, fusum donec prolapsus in Idan 755
decidit: hic saeui miser inter funera belli
palpitat et mortem sociosque hostesque precatur.
addit Abantiadas, insignem crinibus Argum
et male dilectum miserae Cydona sorori.
[illi perfossum telo patefecerat inguen] 760

. . . 760a

huic geminum obliqua traiecit harundine tempus,
exilit hac ferrum, uelox hac penna remansit;
fluxit utrimque cruor. nulli tela aspera mortis
dant ueniam, non forma Lamum, non infula Lygdum,
non pubescentes texerunt Aeolon anni: 765
figitur ora Lamus, flet saucius inguina Lygdus,
perfossum telo niueam gemis, Aeole, frontem.
te praeceps Euboea tulit, te candida Thisbe
miserat, hunc uirides non excipietis ~Amyclae.
numquam cassa manus, nullum sine numine fugit 770
missile, nec requies dextrae, sonitumque priori
iungit harundo sequens. unum quis crederet arcum

aut unam saeuire manum? modo derigit ictus,
nunc latere alterno dubius conamina mutat,
nunc fugit instantes et solo respicit arcu. 775

et iam mirantes indignantesque coibant
Labdacidae, primusque Iouis de sanguine claro
Amphion ignarus adhuc, quae funera campis
ille daret: 'quonam usque moram lucrabere fati,
o multum meritos puer orbatum parentes? 780
quin etiam menti tumor atque audacia gliscit,
congressus dum nemo tuos pugnamque minorem
dignatur bellis, iramque relinqueris infra.

i, repete Arcadiam mixtusque aequalibus illic,
dum ferus hic uero desaeuit puluere Mauors, 785
proelia lude domi: quodsi te maesta sepulcri
fama mouet, dabimus leto moriari uirorum!
iamdudum hunc contra stimulis grauioribus ardet
trux Atalantiades; necdum ille quierat, et inquit:

'sera etiam in Thebas, quarum hic exercitus, arma 790
profero; quisnam adeo puer, ut bellare recuset
talibus? Arcadiae stirpem et fera semina gentis,
non Thebana uides: non me sub nocte silenti
Thyias Echionio genetrix famulata Lyaeo
edidit, haud umquam deformes uertice mitras 795
induimus turpemque manu iactauimus hastam.

protinus astrictos didici reptare per amnes
horrendasque domos magnarum intrare ferarum
et++quid plura loquar? ferrum mea semper et arcus
mater habet, uestri feriunt caua tympana patres.' 800

non tulit Amphion uultumque et in ora loquentis
telum inmane rotat; sed ferri lumine diro
turbatus sonipes sese dominumque retorsit
in latus atque auidam transmisit deuus hastam.
acrior hoc iuuenem stricto mucrone petebat 805
Amphion, cum se medio Latonia campo
iecit et ante oculos omni stetit obuia uultu.

haerebat iuueni deuinctus amore pudico
Maenalius Dorceus, cui bella suumque timorem

mater et audaces pueri mandauerat annos. 810
huius tum uultu dea dissimulata profatur:
‘hactenus Ogygias satis infestasse cateruas,
Parthenopaeae, satis; miserae iam parce parenti,
parce deis, quicumque fauent.’ nec territus ille:
‘hunc sine me (non plura petam), fidissime Dorceu, 815
sternere humi, qui tela meis gerit aemula telis
et similes cultus et frena sonantia iactat.
frena regam, cultus Triuiiae pendebitis alto
limine, captiuis matrem donabo pharetris.’
audiit et mixto risit Latonia fletu. 820

uiderat hanc caeli iamdudum in parte remota
Gradium complexa Venus, dumque anxia Thebas
commemorat Cadmumque uiro caraeque nepotes
Harmoniae, pressum tacito sub corde dolorem
tempestiua mouet: ‘nonne hanc, Gradiue, proteruam 825
uirginitate uides mediam se ferre uirorum
coetibus, utque acies audax et Martia signa
temperet? en etiam donat praebetque necandos
tot nostra de gente uiros. huic tradita uirtus,
huic furor? agrestes superest tibi figere dammas.’ 830
desiluit iustis commotus in arma querelis
Bellipotens, cui sola uagum per ina ruenti
Ira comes, reliqui sudant ad bella Furores.
nec mora, cum maestam monitu Letoida duro
increpat adsistens: ‘non haec tibi proelia diuum 835
dat pater; armiferum ni protinus improba campum
deseris, huic aequam nosces nec Pallada dextrae.’
quid faciat contra? premit hinc Mauortia cuspis,
hinc plenae tibi, parue, colus, Iouis inde seueri
uultus: abit solo post haec euicta pudore. 840

at pater Ogygias Mauors circumspicit alas
horrendumque Dryanta mouet, cui sanguinis auctor
turbidus Orion, comitesque odisse Dianae
(inde furit) patrium. hic turbatos arripit ense
Arcadas exarmatque ducem; cadit agmine longo 845
Cyllenes populus Tegeesque habitator opacae

Aepytiique duces Telphusiacaeque phalanges.
ipsum autem et lassa fidit prosternere dextra,
nec seruat uires: etenim huc iam fessus et illuc
mutabat turmas; urgent praesagia mille 850
funeris, et nigrae praecedunt nubila mortis.
iamque miser raros comites uerumque uidebat
Dorcea, iam uires paulatim abscedere sensit,
sentit et exhaustas umero leuiore pharetras;
iam minus atque minus fert ira, puerque uidetur 855
et sibi, cum torua clipei metuendus obarsit
luce Dryas: tremor ora repens ac uiscera torsit
Arcados; utque feri uectorem fulminis albus
cum supra respexit olor, cupit hiscere ripam
Strymonos et trepidas in pectora contrahit alas: 860
sic iuuenem saeui conspecta mole Dryantis
iam non ira subit, sed leti nuntius horror.
arma tamen, frustra superos Triuiamque precatus,
molitur pallens et surdos expedit arcus.
iamque instat telis dextramque obliquus in ulnam 865
cornua contingit mucrone et pectora neruo,
cum ducis Aonii magno cita turbine cuspis
fertur in aduersum neruique obliqua sonori
uincla secat: pereunt ictus, manibusque remissis
uana supinato ceciderunt spicula cornu. 870
tunc miser et frenos turbatus et arma remisit,
uulneris impatiens umeri quod tegmine dextri
intrarat facilemque cutem; subit altera cuspis
cornipedisque fugam succiso poplite sistit.
tum cadit ipse Dryas (mirum!) nec uulneris umquam 875
consciis: olim auctor teli causaeque patebant.

at puer infusus sociis in deuia campi
tollitur (heu simplex aetas!) moriensque iacentem
flebat equum; cecidit laxata casside uultus,
aegraque per trepidos expirat gratia uisus, 880
et prensis concussa comis ter colla quaterque
stare negant, ipsisque nefas lacrimabile Thebis,
ibat purpureus niueo de pectore sanguis.

tandem haec singultu uerba incidente profatur:
‘labimur, i, miseram, Dorceu, solare parentem. 885
illa quidem, si uera ferunt praesagia curae,
aut somno iam triste nefas aut omine uidit.
tu tamen arte pia trepidam suspende diuque
decipito; neu tu subitus neue arma tenenti
ueneris, et tandem, cum iam cogere fateri, 890
dic: “merui, genetrix, poenas; inuita capesse:
arma puer rapui, nec te retinente quieui,
nec tibi sollicitae saltem inter bella peperci.
uiue igitur potiusque animis irascere nostris
et iam pone metus. frustra de colle Lycae 895
anxia prospectas, si quis per nubila longe
aut sonus aut nostro sublatus ab agmine puluis:
frigidus et nuda iaceo tellure, nec usquam
tu prope, quae uultus efflantiaque ora teneres.
hunc tamen, orba parens, crinem,” dextraque secandum 900
praebuit, “hunc toto capies pro corpore crinem,
comere quem frustra me dedignante solebas.
huic dabis exequias, atque inter iusta memento
ne quis inexpertis hebetet mea tela lacertis
dilectosque canes ullis agat amplius antris. 905
haec autem primis arma infelicia castris
ure, uel ingratae crimen suspende Dianae.”

Liber Decimus

Obruit Hesperia Phoebum nox umida porta,
imperiis properata Iouis; nec castra Pelasgum
aut Tyrias miseratus opes, sed triste tot extra
agmina et inmeritas ferro decrescere gentes.
panditur inmenso deformis sanguine campus: 5
illic arma et equos, ibant quibus ante superbi,
funeraque orba rogis neglectaque membra relinquunt.
tunc inhonora cohors laceris insignibus aegras
secernunt acies, portaeque, ineuntibus arma
angustae populis, latae cepere reuersos. 10
par utrimque dolor; sed dant solacia Thebis
quattuor errantes Danaum sine praeside turmae:
ceu mare per tumidum uiduae moderantibus alni,
quas deus et casus tempestatesque gubernant.
inde animus Tyrii non iam sua castra, sed ultro 15
hostilem seruare fugam, ne forte Mycenae,
contenti rediisse, petant: dat tessera signum
excubiis, positaeque uices; dux noctis opertae
sorte Meges ultroque Lycus. iamque ordine iusso
arma, dapes ignemque ferunt; rex firmat euntes: 20
'uictores Danaum (neque enim lux crastina longe,
nec quae pro timidis intercessere tenebrae
semper erunt), augete animos et digna secundis
pectora ferte deis. iacet omnis gloria Larnae
praecipuaeque manus: subiit ultricia Tydeus 25
Tartara, Mors subitam integri stupet auguris umbram,
Ismenos raptis tumet Hippomedontis opimis,
Arcada belligeris pudet adnumerare tropaeis.
in manibus merces, nusquam capita ardua belli
monstrataeque ducum septena per agmina cristae; 30
scilicet Adraſti ſenium fraterque iuuenta
peior et inſanis Capaneus metuendus in armis.
ite age et obſeſſis uigilem circumdate flammam!
nulli ex hoſte metus: praedam adſeruatis opesque

iam uestras.' sic ille truces hortatibus implet 35
Labdacidas, iuuat exhaustos iterare labores:
sicut erant (pulis sudorque cruorque per artus
mixtus adhuc) uertere gradum; uix obuia passi
conloquia, amplexus etiam dextrasque suorum
excussere umeris. tunc frontem auersaque terga 40
partiti laterumque sinus, uallum undique cingunt
ignibus infestis. rabidi sic agmine multo
sub noctem coiere lupi, quos omnibus agris
nil non ausa fames longo tenuauit hiatu:
iam stabula ipsa premunt, torquet spes inrita fauces 45
balatusque tremens pinguesque ab ouilibus aurae;
quod superest, duris adfrangunt postibus ungues
pectoraque, et siccos minuunt in limine dentes.

at procul Argolici supplex in margine templi
coetus et ad patrias fusae Pelopeides aras 50
sceptrae Iunonis opem reditumque suorum
exposcunt, pictasque fores et frigida uultu
saxa terunt paruosque docent procumbere natos.
condiderant iam uota diem; nox addita curas
iungit, et ingestis uigilant altaria flammis. 55
peplum etiam dono, cuius mirabile textum
nulla manu sterilis nec dissociata marito
uersarat, calathis castae uelamina diuae
haud spernenda ferunt, uariis ubi plurima floret
purpura picta modis mixtoque incenditur auro. 60
ipsa illic magni thalamo desponsa Tonantis,
expers conubii et timide positura sororem,
lumine demisso pueri Iouis oscula libat
simplex et nondum furtis offensa mariti.
hoc tunc Argolicae sanctum uelamine matres 65
induerant ebur, et lacrimis questuque rogabant:
'aspice sacrilegas Cadmeae paelicis arces,
siderei regina poli, tumulumque rebellem
disice et in Thebas aliud (potes) excute fulmen.'
quid faciat? scit Fata suis contraria Grai 70
auersumque Iouem, sed nec periisse precatus

tantaque dona uelit; tempus tamen obuia magni
fors dedit auxilii. uidet alto ex aethere clausa
moenia et insomni uallum statione teneri:
horruit irarum stimulis motaque uerendum 75
turbauit diadema coma: non saeuus arsit
Herculeae cum matris onus geminosque Tonantis
secubitus uacuis indignaretur in astris.
ergo intempesta somni dulcedine captos
destinat Aonios leto praebere, suamque 80
orbibus accingi solitis iubet Irin et omne
mandat opus. paret iussis dea clara polumque
linquit et in terras longo suspenditur arcu.

stat super occiduae nebulosa cubilia Noctis
Aethiopasque alios, nulli penetrabilis astro, 85
lucus iners, subterque cauis graue rupibus antrum
it uacuum in montem, qua desidis atria Somni
securumque larem segnis Natura locauit.
limen opaca Quies et pigra Obliuio seruant
et numquam uigili torpens Ignauia uultu. 90
Otia uestibulo pressisque Silentia pennis
muta sedent abiguntque truces a culmine uentos
et ramos errare uetant et murmura demunt
alitibus. non hic pelagi, licet omnia clament
litora, non ullus caeli fragor; ipse profundis 95
uallibus effugiens speluncae proximus amnis
saxa inter scopulosque tacet: nigrantia circum
armenta omne solo recubat pecus, et noua marcent
germina, terrarumque inclinat spiritus herbas.
mille intus simulacra dei caelauerat ardens 100
Mulciber: hic haeret lateri redimita Voluptas,
hic comes in requiem uergens Labor, est ubi Baccho,
est ubi Martigenae socium puluinar Amori
obtinet. interius tecti in penetralibus altis
et cum Morte iacet, nullique ea tristis imago 105
cernitur. hae species. ipse autem umentia subter
antra soporifero stipatos flore tapetas
incubat; exhalant uestes et corpore pigro

strata calent, supraque torum niger efflat anhelō
ore uapor; manus haec fusos a tempore laeuo 110
sustentat crines, haec cornu oblita remisit.
adsunt innumero circum uaga Somnia uultu,
uera simul falsis permixtaque ~flumina flammis~
Noctis opaca cohors, trabibusque ac postibus haerent,
aut tellure iacent. tenuis, qui circuit aulam, 115
inualidusque nitor, primosque hortantia somnos
languida succiduis expirant lumina flammis.

huc se caeruleo librauit ab aethere uirgo
discolor: effulgent siluae, tenebrosaue tempe
arrisere deae, et zonis lucentibus icta 120
euigilat domus; ipse autem nec lampade clara
nec sonitu nec uoce deae percussus eodem
more iacet, donec radios Thaumantias omnes
impulit inque oculos penitus descendit inertes.
tunc sic orsa loqui nimborum fulua creatrix: 125
‘Sidonios te Iuno duces, mitissime diuum
Somne, iubet populumque trucis defigere Cadmi,
qui nunc euentu belli tumefactus Achaeum
peruigil adseruat uallum et tua iura recusat.
da precibus tantis; rara est hoc posse facultas 130
placatumque Iouem dextra Iunone mereri.’
dixit, et increpitans languentia pectora dextra,
ne pereant uoces, iterumque iterumque monebat.
ille deae iussis uultu, quo nutat, eodem
adnuit; excedit grauior nigrantibus antris 135
Iris et obtusum multo iubar excitat imbri.

ipse quoque et uolucrum gressum et uentosa citauit
tempora, et obscuri sinuatam frigore caeli
impleuit chlamydem, tacitoque per aethera cursu
fertur et Aoniis longe grauis inminet aruis. 140
illius aura solo uolucres pecudesque ferasque
explicat, et penitus, quemcumque superuolat orbem,
languida de scopulis sidunt freta, pigrius haerent
nubila, demittunt extrema cacumina siluae,
pluraque laxato ceciderunt sidera caelo. 145

primus adesse deum subita caligine sensit
campus, et innumerae uoces fremitusque uirorum
summisere sonum; cum uero umentibus alis
incubuit piceaque haud umquam densior umbra
castra subit, errare oculi resolutaque colla, 150
et medio adfatu uerba imperfecta relinqui.
mox et fulgentes clipeos et saeua remittunt
pila manu, lassique cadunt in pectora uultus.
et iam cuncta silent: ipsi iam stare recusant
cornipedes, ipsos subitus cinis abstulit ignes. 155
at non et trepidis eadem Sopor otia Grais
suadet, et adiunctis arcet sua nubila castris
noctiuagi uis blanda dei: stant undique in armis
foedam indignantes noctem uigilesque superbos.
ecce repens superis animum lymphantibus horror 160
Thiodamanta subit formidandoque tumultu
pandere fata iubet, siue hanc Saturnia mentem,
siue nouum comitem bonus instigabat Apollo.
prosilit in medios, uisu audituque tremendus
impatiensque dei, fragili quem mente receptum 165
non capit: exundant stimuli, nudusque per ora
stat furor, et trepidas incerto sanguine tendit
exhauritque genas; acies huc errat et illuc,
sertaque mixta comis sparsa ceruice flagellat.
sic Phryga terrificis genetrix Idaea cruentum 170
elicit ex adytis consumptaque bracchia ferro
scire uetat; quatit ille sacras in pectora pinus
sanguineosque rotat crines et uulnera cursu
exanimat: pauet omnis ager, respersaque cultrix
arbor, et attoniti currum erexere leones. 175
uentum ad consilii penetrale domumque uerendam
signorum, magnis ubi dudum cladibus aeger,
rerum extrema mouens, frustra consultat Adrastus.
stant circum subiti proceres, ut quisque perempto
proximus, et magnis loca desolata tuentur 180
regibus, haud laeti seque huc creuisse dolentes.
non secus amisso medium cum praeside puppis

fregit iter, subit ad uidui moderamina clauī
aut laterum custos aut quem penes obuia ponto
prora fuit: stupet ipsa ratis tardeque sequuntur 185
arma, nec accedit domino tutela minori.
ergo alacer trepidos sic erigit augur Achiuos:
‘magna deum mandata, duces, monitusque uerendos
aduehimus: non hae nostro de pectore uoces:
ille canit, cui me famulari et sumere uittas 190
uestra fides, ipso non discordante, subegit.
nox fecunda operum pulchraeque accommoda fraudi
panditur augurio diuum; uocat obuia Virtus,
et poscit Fortuna manus. stupet obruta somno
Aonidum legio: tempus nunc funera regum 195
ulcisci miserumque diem; rapite arma morasque
frangite portarum: sociis hoc subdere flammās,
hoc tumulare suos. equidem haec et Marte diurno,
dum res infractae pulsique in terga redimus,
(per tripodas iuro et rapti noua fata magistri) 200
uidi, et me uolucres circum plausere secundae.
sed nunc certa fides. modo me sub nocte silenti
ipse, ipse adsurgens iterum tellure soluta,
qualis erat (solos infecerat umbra iugales),
Amphiaraus adit: non uanae monstra quietis, 205
nec somno comperta loquor. “tune,” inquit, “inertes
Inachidas (redde haec Parnasia sarta meosque
redde deos) tantam patiere amittere noctem,
degener? haec egomet caeli secreta uagosque
edocui lapsus? uade heia, ulciscere ferro 210
nos saltem!” dixit, meque haec ad limina uisus
cuspidē sublata totoque impellere curru.
quare agite, utendum superis; non comminus hostes
sternendi: bellum iacet, et saeuire potestas.
ecqui aderunt, quos ingenti se attollere fama 215
non pigeat, dum fata sinunt? iterum ecce benignae
noctis aues; sequor, et comitum licet agmina cessent,
solus eo! atque adeo uenit ille et quassat habenas.’
talīa uociferans noctem exturbabat, euntque

non secus accensi proceres quam si omnibus idem 220
corde deus: flagrant comitari et iungere casus.
ter denos numero, turmarum robora, iussus
ipse legit; circa fremit indignata iuuentus
cetera, cur maneant castris ignauaque seruent
otia: pars sublime genus, pars facta suorum, 225
pars sua, sortem alii clamant, sortem undique poscunt.
gaudet in aduersis animoque adsurgit Adrastus.
uertice sic Pholoes uolucrum nutritor equorum,
cum fetura gregem pecoroso uere nouauit,
laetatur cernens hos montis in ardua niti, 230
hos innare uadis, certare parentibus illos;
tunc uacuo sub corde mouet, qui molle domandi
ferre iugum, qui terga boni, quis in arma tubasque
natus, ad Eleas melior quis surgere palmas:
talis erat turmae ductor longaeuus Achiuae. 235
nec deest coeptis: 'unde haec tam sera repente
numina? qui fractos superi rediistis ad Argos?
estne hic infelix uirtus, gentique superstes
sanguis, et in miseris animorum semina durant?
laudo equidem, egregii iuuenes, pulchraque meorum 240
seditione fruor; sed fraudem et operta paramus
proelia, celandi motus: numquam apta latenti
turba dolo. seruare animos, uenit ultor in hostes
ecce dies; tunc arma palam, tunc ibimus omnes.'
his tandem uirtus iuuenum frenata quieuit: 245
non aliter moto quam si pater Aeolus antro
portam iterum saxo premat imperiosus et omne
claudat iter, iam iam sperantibus aequora uentis.
insuper Herculeum sibi iungit Agyllea uates
Actoraque: hic aptus suadere, hic robore iactat 250
non cessisse patri; comites tribus ordine deni,
horrendum Aoniis et contra stantibus agmen.
ipse noui gradiens furta ad Mauortia belli
ponit adoratas, Phoebea insignia, frondes,
longaeuique ducis gremio commendat honorem 255
frontis, et oblatam Polynicis munere grato

loricam galeamque subit. ferus Actora magno
ense grauat Capaneus, ipse haud dignatus in hostem
ire dolo superosque sequi. permutat Agylleus
arma trucidis Nomii: quid enim fallentibus umbris 260
arcus et Herculeae iuuissent bella sagittae?

inde per abruptas castrorum ex aggere pinnas,
ne grauis exclamet portae mugitus aenae,
praecipitant saltu; nec longum, et protinus ingens
praeda solo ceu iam exanimis multoque peracti 265
ense iacent. 'ite, o socii, quacumque uoluptas
caedis inexhaustae, superisque fauentibus, oro,
sufficite!' hortatur clara iam uoce sacerdos,
'cernitis expositas turpi marcore cohortes?
pro pudor! Argolicas hinc ausi obsidere portas, 270
hi seruare uiros?' sic fatus, et exiit ensem
fulmineum rapidaque manu morientia transit
agmina. quis numeret caedes, aut nomine turbam
exanimum signare queat? subit ordine nullo
tergaque pectoraque et galeis inclusa relinquit 275
murmura permiscetque uagos in sanguine manes:
hunc temere explicitum stratis, hunc sero remissis
gressibus inlapsus clipeo et male tela tenentem,
coetibus hos mediis uina inter et arma iacentes,
adclines clipeis alios, ut quemque ligatum 280
infelix tellure sopor supremaque nubes
obruerat. nec numen abest, armataque Iuno
lunarem quatiens exerta lampada dextra
pandit iter firmatque animos et corpora monstrat.
sentit adesse deam, tacitus sed gaudia celat 285
Thiodamas; iam tarda manus, iam debile ferrum
et caligantes nimiis successibus irae.
Caspia non aliter magnorum in strage iuuenum
tigris, ubi inmenso rabies placata cruore
lassauitque genas et crasso sordida tabo 290
confudit maculas, spectat sua facta doletque
defecisse famem: uictus sic augur inerrat
caedibus Aoniis; optet nunc bracchia centum

centenasque in bella manus; iam taedet inanes
exhaustire animas, hostemque adsurgere mallet. 295

parte alia segnes magno satus Hercule uastat
Sidonios Actorque alia, sua quemque cruento
limite turba subit: stagnant nigrantia tabo
gramina, sanguineis nutant tentoria riuis;
fumat humus, somnique et mortis anhelitus una 300
uoluitur; haud quisquam uisus aut ora iacentum
erexit: tali miseris deus aliger umbra
incubat et tantum morientia lumina soluit.

traxerat insomnis cithara ludoque suprema
sidera iam nullos uisurus Ialmenus ortus, 305
Sidonium paeana canens; huic languida ceruix
in laeuum cogente deo, mediaque iacebant
colla relictæ lyra: ferrum per pectus Agylleus
exigit aptatamque caua testudine dextram
percutit et digitos inter sua fila trementes. 310
proturbat mensas dirus liquor: undique manant
sanguine permixti latices, et Bacchus in altos
crateras paterasque redit. ferus occupat Actor
implicitum fratri Thamyrin, Tagus haurit Echecli
terga coronati, Danaus caput amputat Hebri: 315
nescius heu rapitur fati, hilarisque sub umbras
uita fugit mortisque ferae lucrata dolores.

stratus humo gelida subter iuga fida rotasque
Calpetus Aonios gramen gentile metentes
proflatu terrebat equos: madida ora redundant 320
accensusque mero sopor aestuat; ecce iacentis
Inachus uates iugulum fodit, expulit ingens
uina cruor fractumque perit in sanguine murmur.
fors illi praesaga quies, nigrasque grauatus
per somnum Thebas et Thiodamanta uidebat. 325

quarta soporiferae superabant tempora nocti,
cum uacuae nubes et honor non omnibus astris,
adflatusque fugit curru maiore Bootes.
iamque ipsum defecit opus, cum prouidus Actor
Thiodamanta uocat: 'satis haec inopina Pelasgis 330

gaudia: uix ullos tanto reor agmine saeuam
effugisse necem, ni quos deformis in alto
sanguine degeneres occultat uita; secundis
pone modum; sunt et diris sua numina Thebis.
forsitan et nobis modo quae fauere recedunt.’ 335
paruit, et madidas tollens ad sidera palmas:
‘Phoebe, tibi exuias monstratae praemia noctis
nondum ablutus aquis (tibi enim haec ego sacra litau)
trado ferus miles tripodum fidusque sacerdos.
si non dedecui tua iussa tulique prementem, 340
saepe ueni, saepe hanc dignare inrumpere mentem.
nunc tibi crudus honos, trunca arma cruorque uirorum:
at patrias si quando domos optataque, Paean,
templa, Lycie, dabis, tot ditia dona sacratis
postibus et totidem uoti memor exige tauros.’ 345
dixerat, et laetis socios reuocabat ab armis.

uenerat hos inter fato Calydonius Hoplaus
Maenaliusque Dymas, dilecti regibus ambo,
regum ambo comites, quorum post funera maesti
uitam indignantur. prior Arcada concitat Hoplaus: 350
‘nullane post manes regis tibi cura perempti,
care Dyma, teneant quem iam fortasse uolucres
Thebanique canes? patriae quid deinde feretis,
Arcades? en reduces contra uenit aspera mater:
funus ubi? at nostro semper sub pectore Tydeus 355
saeuit inops tumuli, quamuis patientior artus
ille nec abruptis adeo lacrimabilis annis.
ire tamen saeuumque libet nullo ordine passim
scrutari campum, mediasue inrumpere Thebas.’
excipit orsa Dymas: ‘per ego haec uaga sidera iuro, 360
per ducis errantes instar mihi numinis umbras,
idem animus misero; comitem circumspicit olim
mens humili luctu, sed nunc prior ibo’ — uiamque
incohat et maesto conuersus ad aethera uultu
sic ait: ‘arcanæ moderatrix Cynthia noctis, 365
si te tergeminis perhibent uariare figuris
numen et in siluas alio descendere uultu,

ille comes nuper nemorumque insignis alumnus,
 ille tuus, Diana, puer (nunc respice saltem)
 quaeritur.' intendit pronis dea curribus alnum 370
 sidus et admoto monstrauit funera cornu.
 apparent campi Thebaeque altusque Cithaeron:
 sic ubi nocturnum tonitru malus aethera frangit
 Iuppiter, absiliunt nubes et fulgure claro
 astra patent, subitusque oculis ostenditur orbis. 375
 accepit radios et eadem percitus Hopleus
 Tydea luce uidet; longe dant signa per umbras
 mutua laetantes, et amicum pondus uterque,
 ceu reduces uitae saeuaque a morte remissos,
 subiecta ceruice leuant; nec uerba, nec ausi 380
 flere diu: prope saeua dies indexque minatur
 ortus. eunt taciti per maesta silentia magnis
 passibus exhaustasque dolent pallere tenebras.
 inuida fata piis et fors ingentibus ausis
 rara comes. iam castra uident animisque propinquant, 385
 et decrescit onus, subiti cum pulueris umbra
 et sonus a tergo. monitu ducis acer agebat
 Amphion equites, noctem uigilataque castra
 explorare datus, primusque per auia campi
 usque procul (necdum totas lux soluerat umbras) 390
 nescio quid uisu dubium incertumque moueri
 corporaque ire uidet; subitus mox fraude reperta
 exclamat, 'cohibete gradum quicumque!' sed hostes
 esse patet: miseri pergunt anteire timentque
 non sibi; tunc mortem trepidis minitatur et hastam 395
 expulit, ac uanos alte leuat eminus ictus,
 adfectans errare manum. stetit illa Dymantis
 ante oculos, qui forte prior, gressumque repressit.
 at non magnanimus curauit perdere iactus
 Aepytus, et fixo transuerberat Hoplea tergo 400
 pendentisque etiam perstrinxit Tydeos armos.
 labitur egregii nondum ducis inmemor Hopleus,
 expiratque tenens (felix, si corpus ademptum
 nesciat), et saeuas talis descendit ad umbras.

uiderat hoc retro conuersus et agmina sentit 405
 iuncta Dymas, dubius precibusne subiret an armis
 instantes: arma ira dabat, fortuna precari
 non audere iubet; neutri fiducia coepto:
 distulit ira preces; ponit miserabile corpus
 ante pedes, tergoque graues quas forte gerebat 410
 tigridis exuuias in laeuam torquet et obstat
 exertum obiectans mucronem, inque omnia tela
 uersus et ad caedem iuxta mortemque paratus:
 ut lea, quam saeuo fetam pressere cubili
 uenantes Numidae, natos erecta superstat, 415
 mente sub incerta toruum ac miserabile frendens;
 illa quidem turbare globos et frangere morsu
 tela queat, sed prolis amor crudelia uincit
 pectora, et a media catulos circumspicit ira.
 et iam laeua uiro, quamuis saeuire uetaret 420
 Amphion, erepta manus, puerique trahuntur
 ora supina comis. serus tunc denique supplex
 demisso mucrone rogat: 'moderatus, oro,
 ducite, fulminei per uos cunabula Bacchi
 Inoamque fugam uestrique Palaemonis annos! 425
 si cui forte domi natorum gaudia, si quis
 hic pater, angusti puero date pulueris haustus
 exiguamque facem! rogat, en rogat ipse iacentis
 uultus: ego infandas potior satiare uolucres,
 me praebete feris, ego bella audere coegi.' 430
 'immo,' ait Amphion, 'regem si tanta cupido
 condere, quae timidis belli mens, ede, Pelasgis,
 quid fracti exanguesque parent; cuncta ocus effer,
 et uita tumuloque ducis donatus abito.'
 horruit et toto praecordia protinus Arcas 435
 impleuit capulo. 'summumne hoc cladibus,' inquit,
 'deerat ut adflictos turparem ego proditor Argos?
 nil emimus tanti, nec sic uelit ipse cremari.'
 sic ait, et magno proscissum uulnere pectus
 iniecit puero, supremaque murmura uoluens: 440
 'hoc tamen interea ~et tu potiare sepulcro.'

tales optatis regum in complexibus ambo,
par insigne animis, Aetolus et inclutus Arcas,
egregias efflant animas letoque fruuntur.
uos quoque sacrati, quamuis mea carmina surgant 445
inferiore lyra, memores superabitis annos.
forsitan et comites non aspernabitur umbras
Euryalus Phrygiiue admittet gloria Nisi.

at ferus Amphion, regi qui facta reportent
edoceantque dolum captiuaeque corpora reddant, 450
mittit ouans; clausis ipse insultare Pelasgis
tendit et abscisos sociorum ostendere uultus.
interea reducem murorum e culmine Grai
Thiodamanta uident nec iam erumpentia celant
gaudia. ut exertos enses et caede recenti 455
arma rubere notant, nouus adsilit aethera magnum
clamor, et e summo pendent cupida agmina uallo
noscere quisque suos. uolucrum sic turba recentum,
cum reducem longo prospexit in aere matrem,
ire cupit contra summique e margine nidi 460
extat hians, iam iamque cadat, ni pectore toto
obstet aperta parens et amantibus increpat alis.
dumque opus arcanum et taciti compendia Martis
enumerant laetisque suos complexibus implent
Hopleaque exquirunt tardumque Dymanta queruntur: 465
ecce et Dircaeae iuxta dux concitus alae
uenerat Amphion; non longum caede recenti
laetatus uidet innumeris feruere cateruis
tellurem atque una gentem expirare ruina.
qui tremor inicitur caeli de lampade tactis, 470
hic fixit iuuenem, pariterque horrore sub uno
uox, acies sanguisque perit, gemitusque parantem
ipse ultro conuertit equus; fugit ala retorto
pulvere. nondum illi Thebarum claustra subibant,
et iam Argiua cohors nocturno freta triumpho 475
prosilit in campos; per et arma et membra iacentum
taetraque congerie sola semianimumque cruorem
cornipedes ipsique ruunt: grauis exterit artus

ungula, sanguineus lauat imber et impedit axes.
dulce uiris hac ire uia, ceu tecta superbi 480
Sidonia atque ipsas calcent in sanguine Thebas.
hortatur Capaneus: 'satis occultata, Pelasgi,
delituit uirtus: nunc, nunc mihi uincere pulchrum
teste die; mecum clamore et puluere aperto
ite palam, iuuenes: sunt et mihi prouida dextrae 485
omina et horrendi stricto mucrone furores.'
sic ait; ardentes alacer succendit Adrastus
Argolicusque gener, sequitur iam tristior augur.
iamque premunt muros (et adhuc noua funera narrat
Amphion) miseramque intrarant protinus urbem, 490
ni Megareus specula citus exclamasset ab alta:
'claude, uigil, subeunt hostes, claude undique portas!'

est ubi dat uires nimius timor: ocuis omnis
porta coit; solas dum tardius artat Echion
Ogygias, audax animis Spartana iuuentus 495
inrupit, caesique ruunt in limine primo
incola Taygeti Panopeus rigidique natator
Oebalus Eurotae; turque, o spectate palaestris
omnibus et nuper Nemeaeo in puluere felix,
Alcidama, primis quem caestibus ipse ligarat 500
Tyndarides, nitidi moriens conuexa magistri
respicis: auerso pariter deus occidit astro.
te nemus Oebalium, te lubrica ripa Lacaenae
uirginis et falso gurgis cantatus olori
flebit, Amyclaeis Triuia lugebere Nymphis, 505
et quae te leges praeceptaque fortia belli
erudiit genetrix, nimium didicisse queretur.
talis Echionio Mauors in limine saeuit.

tandem umeris obnixus Acron et pectore toto
pronus Ialmenides aeratae robora portae 510
torserunt: quanta pariter ceruice gementes
profringunt inarata diu Pangaea iuuenti.
par operis iactura lucro, quippe hoste retento
exclusere suos; cadit intra moenia Graius
Ormenus, et pronas tendentis Amyntoris ulnas 515

fundentisque preces penitus ceruice remissa
uerba solo uultusque cadunt, colloque decorus
torquis in hostiles cecidit per uulnus harenas.
soluitur interea uallum, primaeque recusant
stare morae; iam se peditum iunxere cateruae 520
moenibus: at patulas saltu transmittere fossas
horror equis: haerent trepidi atque inmane pauentes
abruptum mirantur agi; nunc impetus ire
margine ab extremo, nunc sponte in frena recedunt.
hi praefixa solo uellunt munimina, at illi 525
portarum obiectus minuunt et ferrea sudant
claustra remoliri, trabibusque artata sonoro
pellunt saxa loco; pars ad fastigia missas
exultant haesisse faces, pars ima lacessunt
scrutanturque cauas caeca testudine turre. 530

at Tyrii, quae sola salus, caput omne coronant
murorum, nigrasque sudes et lucida ferro
spicula et arsuras caeli per inania glandes
saxaque in aduersos ipsis auulsa rotabant
moenibus: exundant saeuo fastigia nimbo, 535
armataeque uomunt stridentia tela fenestrae.
qualiter aut Malean aut alta Ceraunia supra
cessantes in nube sedent nigrisque leguntur
collibus et subitae saliunt in uela procellae:
talīs Agenoreis Argiūm exercitus armīs 540
obruitur; non ora uirum, non pectora flectit
imber atrox, rectosque tenent in moenia uultus
inmemores leti et tantum sua tela uidentes.
Anthea falcato lustrantem moenia curru
desuper Ogygiae pepulit grauis impetus hastae; 545
lora excussa manu, retroque in terga uolutus
semianimos artus ocreis retinentibus haeret;
mirandum uisu belli scelus: arma trahuntur,
fumantesque rotae tellurem et tertius hastae
sulcus arat; longo sequitur uaga puluere ceruix, 550
et resupinarum patet orbita lata comarum.

at tuba luctificis pulsat clangoribus urbem

obsaeptasque fores sonitu perfringit amaro.
diuisere aditus, omnique in limine saeuus
signifer; ante omnes sua damna et gaudia portas. 555
dira intus facies, uix Mauors ipse uidendo
gaudeat; insanis lymphatam horroribus urbem
scindunt dissensu uario Luctusque Furorque
et Pauor et caecis Fuga circumfusa tenebris.
Bellum intrasse putes: feruent discursibus arces, 560
miscentur clamore uiae, ferrum undique et ignes
mente uident, saeuas mente accepere catenas.
consumpsit uentura timor: iam tecta replerant
templaque, et ingratae uallantur planctibus arae.
una omnes eademque subit formido per annos: 565
poscunt fata senes, ardet palletque iuuentus,
atria femineis trepidant ululata querelis.
flent pueri et flendi nequeunt cognoscere causas
attoniti et tantum matrum lamenta tremantes.
illas cogit amor, nec habent extrema pudorem: 570
ipsae tela uiris, ipsae iram animosque ministrant,
hortanturque unaque ruunt, nec auita gementes
limina nec paruos cessant ostendere natos.
sic ubi pumiceo pastor rapturus ab antro
armatas erexit apes, fremit aspera nubes, 575
inque uicem sese stridore hortantur et omnes
hostis in ora uolant, mox deficientibus alis
amplexae flauamque domum captiuamque plangunt
mella laboratasque premunt ad pectora ceras.
nec non ancipitis pugnat sententia uulgi 580
discordesque serit motus: hi reddere fratrem
(nec mussant, sed uoce palam claroque tumultu),
reddere regna iubent; periit reuerentia regis
sollicitis: 'ueniat pactumque hic computet annum,
Cadmeosque lares exul patriasque salutet 585
infelix tenebras; cur autem ego sanguine fraudes
et periura luam regalis crimina noxae?'
inde alii: 'sera ista fides, iam uincere mauult.'
Tiresian alii lacrimis et supplice coetu

orant, quodque unum rebus solamen in artis, 590
 nosse futura rogant. tenet ille inclusa premitque
 fata deum: 'quiane ante duci bene credita nostro
 consilia et monitus, cum perfida bella uetarem?
 te tamen, infelix,' inquit, 'perituraque Thebe,
 si taceam, nequeo miser exaudire cadentem 595
 Argolicumque oculis haurire uacantibus ignem.
 uincamur, Pietas; pone heia altaria, uirgo,
 quaeramus superos.' facit illa, acieque sagaci
 sanguineos flammarum apices geminumque per aras
 ignem et clara tamen mediae fastigia lucis 600
 orta docet; tunc in speciem serpentis inanem
 ancipiti gyro uolui frangique rubore
 demonstrat dubio, patriasque inluminat umbras.
 ille coronatos iamdudum amplectitur ignes,
 fatidicum sorbens uultu flagrante uaporem. 605
 stant tristes horrore comae, uittasque trementes
 caesaries insana leuat: diducta putares
 lumina consumptumque genis rediisse nitorem.
 tandem exundanti permisit uerba furori:
 'audite, o sontes, extrema litamina diuum, 610
 Labdacidae: uenit alma salus, sed limite duro.
 Martius inferias et saeua efflagitat anguis
 sacra: cadat generis quicumque nouissimus extat
 uiperei, datur hoc tantum uictoria pacto.
 felix qui tanta lucem mercede relinquet.' 615
 stabat fatidici prope saeua altaria uatis
 maestus, adhuc patriae tantum communia lugens
 fata, Creon: grandem subiti cum fulminis ictum,
 non secus ac torta traiectus cuspide pectus,
 accipit exanimis sentitque Menoecea posci. 620
 monstrat enim suadetque timor; stupet anxius alto
 corda metu glaciante pater: Trinacria qualis
 ora repperctum Libyco mare sumit ab aestu.
 mox plenum Phoebo uatem et celerare iubentem,
 nunc humilis genua amplectens, nunc ora canentis, 625
 nequiquam reticere rogat; iam Fama sacratam

uocem amplexa uolat, clamantque oracula Thebae.

nunc age, quis stimulos et pulchrae gaudia mortis
addiderit iuueni (neque enim haec absentibus umquam
mens homini transmissa deis), memor incipe Clio, 630
saecula te quoniam penes et digesta uetustas.

diua Iouis solio iuxta comes, unde per orbem
rara dari terrisque solet contingere, Virtus,
seu pater omnipotens tribuit, siue ipsa capaces
elegit penetrare uiros, caelestibus ut tunc 635
desiluit gauisa plagis! dant clara meanti
astra locum quosque ipsa polis adfixerat ignes.
iamque premit terras, nec uultus ab aethere longe;
sed placuit mutare genas, fit prouida Manto,
responsis ut plana fides, et fraude priores 640
exiit uultus. abiit horrorque uigorque
ex oculis, paulum decoris permansit honosque
mollior, et posito uatum gestamina ferro
subdita; descendunt uestes, toruisque ligatur
uitta comis (nam laurus erat); tamen aspera produnt 645
ora deam nimique gradus. sic Lydia coniunx
Amphitryoniaden exutum horrentia terga
perdere Sidonios umeris ridebat amictus
et turbare colus et tympana rumpere dextra.

sed neque te indecorem sacris dignumque iuberi 650
taliam Dircaea stantem pro turre, Menoeceum,
inuenit; inmensae reserato limine portae
sternebas Danaos, pariter Mauortius Haemon.
sed consanguinei quamuis atque omnia fratres,
tu prior: exanimes circum cumulantur acerui; 655
omne sedet telum, nulli sine caedibus ictus
(necdum aderat Virtus); non mens, non dextra quiescit,
non auida arma uacant, ipsa insanire uidetur
Sphinx galeae custos, uisoque animata cruore
emicat effigies et sparsa orichalca renident: 660
cum dea pugnantis capulum dextramque repressit:
'magnanime o iuuenis, quo non agnouerit ullum
certius armifero Cadmi de semine Mauors,

linque humiles pugnās, non haec tibi debita uirtus:
astra uocant, caeloque animam, plus concipe, mittes. 665
iamdudum hoc hilares genitor bacchatur ad aras,
hoc ignes fibraeque uolunt, hoc urguet Apollo:
terrigenam cuncto patriae pro sanguine poscunt.
Fama canit monitus, gaudet Cadmeia plebes
certa tui; rape mente deos, rape nobile fatum. 670
i, precor, accelera, ne proximus occupet Haemon.
sic ait, et magna cunctantis pectora dextra
permulsit tacite seseque in corde reliquit.
fulminis haud citius radiis adflata cupressus
combibit infestas et stirpe et uertice flammas, 675
quam iuuenis multo possessus numine pectus
erexit sensus letique inuasit amorem.
ut uero auersae gressumque habitumque notauit
et subitam a terris in nubila crescere Manto,
obstipuit. 'sequimur, diuum quaecumque uocasti, 680
nec tarde paremus,' ait; iam iamque recedens
instantem uallo Pylum tamen Agrea fixit.
armigeri fessum excipiunt; tum uulgus euntem
auctorem pacis seruatoreque deumque
conclamat gaudens atque ignibus implet honestis. 685
iamque iter ad muros cursu festinus anhelō
obtinet et miseros gaudet uitasse parentes,
cum genitor — steterunt ambo et uox haesit utrique,
deiectaeque genae. tandem pater ante profatus:
'quis nouus inceptis rapuit te casus ab armis? 690
quae bello grauiora paras? dic, nate, precanti,
cur tibi torua acies? cur hic truculentus in ore
pallor, et ad patrios non stant tua lumina uultus?
audisti responsa, palam est. per ego oro tuosque,
nate, meosque annos miseraeque per ubera matris, 695
ne uati, ne crede, puer! superine profanum
dignantur stimulare senem, cui uultus inanis
extinctique orbes et poena simillima diro
Oedipodae? quid si insidiis et fraude dolosa
rex agit, extrema cui nostra in sorte timori 700

nobilitas tuaque ante duces notissima uirtus?
illius haec forsán, remur quae uerba deorum;
ille monet! ne frena animo permitte calenti,
da spatium tenuemque moram, male cuncta ministrat
impetus; hoc, oro, munus concede parenti. 705
sic tua maturis signentur tempora canis,
et sis ipse parens et ad hunc, animose, timorem
peruenias: ne perge meos orbare penates.
externi te nempe patres alienaque tangunt
pignora? si pudor est, primum miserere tuorum. 710
haec pietas, hic uerus honos; ibi gloria tantum
uentosumque decus tituli in morte latentes.
nec timidus te flecto parens: i, proelia misce,
i Danaas acies mediosque per obuius enses:
non teneo; liceat misero tremibunda lauare 715
uulnera et undantem lacrimis siccare cruorem,
teque iterum saeuis iterumque remittere bellis.
hoc malunt Thebae.' sic colla manusque tenebat
implicitus; sed nec lacrimae nec uerba mouebant
dis uotum iuuenem; quin et monstrantibus illis 720
fraude patrem tacita subit auertitque timorem:
'falleris heu uerosque metus, pater optime, nescis.
non me ulli monitus, nec uatum exorsa furentum
sollicitant uanisque mouent (sibi callidus ista
Tiresias nataeque canat) non si ipse reclusis 725
comminus ex adytis in me insaniret Apollo.
sed grauis unanimi casus me fratris ad urbem
sponte refert: gemit Inachia mihi saucius Haemon
cuspide; uix illum medio de puluere belli
inter utrasque acies, iam iamque tenentibus Argis — 730
sed moror. i, refoue dubium turbaeque ferenti
dic, parcant leuiterque uehant; ego uulnera doctum
iungere supremique fugam reuocare cruoris
Aetiona petam.' sic imperfecta locutus
effugit; illi atra mersum caligine pectus 735
confudit sensus; pietas incerta uagatur
discordantque metus, impellunt credere Parcae.

turbidus interea ruptis uenientia portis
agmina belligeri Capaneus agit aequore campi,
cornua nunc equitum, cuneos nunc ille pedestres, 740
et proculcantes moderantum funera currus;
idem altas turres saxis et turbine crebro
laxat, agit turmas idem atque in sanguine fumat.
nunc spargit torquens uolucris noua uulnera plumbo,
nunc iaculum excusso rotat in sublime lacerto, 745
nullaque tectorum subit ad fastigia, quae non
deferat hasta uirum perfusaque caede recurat.
nec iam aut Oeniden aut Hippomedonta peremptos
aut uatem Pelopea Phalanx aut Arcada credunt;
quin socium coisse animas et corpore in uno 750
stare omnes, ita cuncta replet. non ullius aetas,
non cultus, non forma mouet; pugnantibus idem
supplicibusque furit; non quisquam obsistere contra,
non belli temptare uices: procul arma furentis
terribilesque iubas et frontem cassidis horrent. 755

at pius electa murorum in parte Menoeceus
iam sacer aspectu solitoque augustior ore,
ceu subito in terras supero demissus ab axe,
constitit, exempta manifestus casside nosci,
despexitque acies hominum et clamore profundo 760
conuertit campum iussitque silentia bello.
'armorum superi, tuque o qui funere tanto
indulges mihi, Phoebe, mori, date gaudia Thebis
quae pepigi et toto quae sanguine prodigus emi.
ferre retro bellum captaeque impingite Lernae 765
reliquias turpes, confixaque terga fouentes
Inachus indecores pater auersetur alumnos.
at Tyrii templa, arua, domos, conubia, natos
reddite morte mea: si uos placita hostia iuui,
si non attonitis uatis consulta recepi 770
auribus et Thebis nondum credentibus hausi,
haec Amphioniis pro me persoluite terris
ac mihi deceptum, precor, exorate parentem.'
sic ait, insignemque animam mucrone corusco

dedignantem artus pridem maestamque teneri 775
arripit atque uno quaesitam uulnere rumpit.
sanguine tunc spargit turres et moenia lustrat,
seque super medias acies, nondum ense remisso,
iecit et in saeuos cadere est conatus Achiuos.
ast illum amplexae Pietas Virtusque ferebant 780
leniter ad terras corpus; nam spiritus olim
ante Iouem et summis apicem sibi poscit in astris.
iamque intra muros nullo sudore receptum
gaudentes heroa ferunt: abscesserat ultro
Tantalidum uenerata cohors; subit agmine longo 785
colla inter iuuenum, laetisque fauoribus omni
concinitur uulgo Cadmum atque Amphiona supra
conditor; hi sertis, hi ueris honore soluto
accumulant artus patriaque in sede reponunt
corpus adoratum. repetunt mox bella peractis 790
laudibus; hic uicta genitor lacrimabilis ira
congemit, et tandem matri data flere potestas:
‘Iustrallemnem feris ego te, puer inclute, Thebis
deuotumque caput uilis ceu mater alebam?
quod molita nefas? cui tantum inuisa deorum? 795
non ego monstriifero coitu reuoluta notaui
pignora, nec nato peperit funesta nepotes.
quid refert? habet ecce suos Iocasta ducesque
regnantesque uidet: nos saeua piacula bello
demus, ut alterni (placet hoc tibi, fulminis auctor?) 800
Oedipodionii mutent diademata fratres?
quid superos hominesue queror? tu, saeue Menoeceu,
tu miseram ante omnes properasti extinguere matrem.
unde hic mortis amor? quae sacra insania menti?
quosue ego conceptus aut quae male pignora fudi 805
tam diuersa mihi? nimirum Martius anguis,
quaeque nouis proauum tellus effloruit armis —
hinc animi tristes nimiusque in pectore Mauors,
et de matre nihil. sponte en ultroque peremptus
inrumpis maestas Fatis nolentibus umbras. 810
ast egomet Danaos Capaneaue tela uerebar:

haec erat, haec metuenda manus ferrumque quod amens
ipsa dedi. uiden ut iugulo consumpserit ensem?
altius haud quisquam Danaum mucrone subisset.’

diceret infelix etiamnum et cuncta repleret 815
questibus: abducunt comites famulaeque perosam
solantes thalamoque tenent, sedet eruta multo
ungue genas; non illa diem, non uerba precantum
respicit aut uisus flectit tellure relictos,
iam uocis, iam mentis inops. sic aspera tigris 820
fetibus abreptis Scythico deserta sub antro
accubat et tepidi lambit uestigia saxi;
nusquam irae, sedit rabidi feritasque famesque
oris, eunt praeter secura armenta gregesque:
aspicit illa iacens; ubi enim quibus ubera pascat 825
aut quos ingenti premat expectata rapina?

hactenus arma, tubae, ferrumque et uulnera: sed nunc
comminus astrigeros Capaneus tollendus in axes.
non mihi iam solito uatum de more canendum;
maior ab Aoniis poscenda amentia lucis: 830
mecum omnes audete deae! siue ille profunda
missus nocte furor, Capaneaque signa secutae
arma Iouem contra Stygiae rapuere sorores,
seu uirtus egressa modum, seu gloria praeceps,
seu magnae data fama neci, seu laeta malorum 835
principia et blandae superum mortalibus irae.

iam sordent terrena uiro taedetque profundae
caedis, et exhaustis olim Graiumque suisque
missilibus lassa respexit in aethera dextra.
ardua mox toruo metitur culmina uisu, 840
innumerosque gradus gemina latus arbore clausos
aerium sibi portat iter, longequae timendus
multifidam quercum flagranti lumine uibrat;
arma rubent una clipeoque incenditur ignis.
‘hac’ ait ‘in Thebas, hac me iubet ardua uirtus 845
ire, Menoeceo qua lubrica sanguine turris.
experiar quid sacra iuuent, an falsus Apollo.’
dicit, et alterno captiua in moenia gressu

surgit ouans: quales mediis in nubibus aether
uidit Aloidas, cum cresceret impia tellus 850
despectura deos nec adhuc inmane ueniret
Pelion et trepidum iam tangeret Ossa Tonantem.

tunc uero attoniti fatorum in cardine summo,
ceu suprema lues urbi facibusque cruentis
aequatura solo turres Bellona subiret, 855
omnibus e tectis certatim ingentia saxa
roboraque et ualidas fundae Balearis habenas,
nam iaculis caeloque uagis spes unde sagittis? —
uerum audi et tormenta rotant et molibus urgent.
ille nec ingestis nec terga sequentibus umquam 860
detrahitur telis, uacuoque sub aere pendens
plana uelut terra certus uestigia figat,
tendit et ingenti subit occurrente ruina:
amnis ut incumbens longaeui robora pontis
adsiduis oppugnat aquis; iam saxa fatiscunt 865
emotaeque trabes: tanto uiolentior ille
(sentit enim) maiore salo quassatque trahitque
molem aegram, nexus donec celer alueus omnes
abscidit et cursu uictor respirat aperto.
utque petita diu celsus fastigia supra 870
eminuit trepidamque adsurgens desuper urbem
uidit et ingenti Thebas exterruit umbra,
increpat attonitos: ~'humilesne Amphionis arces,
pro pudor, hi faciles, carmenque imbelli secuti,
hi, mentita diu Thebarum fabula, muri?~ 875
et quid tam egregium prosternere moenia molli
structa lyra?' simul insultans gressuque manuque
molibus obstantes cuneos tabulataque saeuus
restruit: absiliunt pontes, tectique trementis
saxea frena labant, dissaeptoque aggere rursus 880
utitur et truncas rupes in templa domosque
praecipitat frangitque suis iam moenibus urbem.

iamque Iouem circa studiis diuersa fremebant
Argolici Tyriique dei; pater, aequus utrisque,
aspicit ingentes ardentum comminus iras 885

seque obstare uidet. gemit inseruante nouerca
Liber et obliquo respectans lumine patrem:
‘nunc ubi saeua manus, meaque heu cunabula flammae?
fulmen, io ubi fulmen?’ ait. gemit auctor Apollo
quas dedit ipse domos; Lernam Thebasque rependit 890
maestus et intento dubitat Tirynthius arcu;
maternos plangit uolucer Danaeius Argos;
flet Venus Harmoniae populos metuensque mariti
stat procul et tacita Gradium respicit ira.
increpat Aonios audax Tritonia diuos, 895
Iunonem tacitam furibunda silentia torquent.
non tamen haec turbant pacem Iouis, ecce quierant
iurgia cum mediis Capaneus auditus in astris,
‘nullane pro trepidis,’ clamabat, ‘numina Thebis
statis? ubi infandae segnes telluris alumni, 900
Bacchus et Alcides? piget instigare minores:
tu potius uenias (quis enim concurrere nobis
dignior?); en cineres Semelaeaeque busta tenentur!
nunc age, nunc totis in me conitere flammis,
Iuppiter! an pauidas tonitru turbare puellas 905
fortior et soceri turres excindere Cadmi?’

ingemuit dictis superum dolor; ipse furentem
risit et incussa sanctarum mole comarum,
‘quaenam spes hominum tumidae post proelia Phlegrae?
tunc etiam feriendus?’ ait. premit undique lentum 910
turba deum frendens et tela ultricia poscit,
nec iam audet fatis turbata obsistere coniunx.
ipsa dato nondum caelestis regia signo
sponte tonat, coeunt ipsae sine flamine nubes
accurruntque imbres: Stygias rupisse catenas 915
Iapetum aut uictam supera ad conuexa leuari
Inarimen Aetnamue putes. pudet ista timere
caelicolas; sed cum in media uertigine mundi
stare uirum insanasque uident deposcere pugnas,
mirantur taciti et dubio pro fulmine pallent. 920
coeperat Ogygiae supra fastigia turris
arcanum mugire polus caelumque tenebris

auferri: tenet ille tamen, quas non uidet, arces,
fulguraque attritis quotiens micuere procellis,
‘his’ ait ‘in Thebas, his iam decet ignibus uti, 925
hinc renouare faces lassamque accendere quercum.’
taliam dicentem toto Ioue fulmen adactum
corripuit: primae fugere in nubila cristae,
et clipei niger umbo cadit, iamque omnia lucent
membra uiri. cedunt acies, et terror utrimque, 930
quo ruat, ardenti feriat quas corpore turmas.
[intra se stridere facem galeamque comasque
quaerit, et urentem thoraca repellere dextra
conatus ferri cinerem sub pectore tractat.]
stat tamen, extremumque in sidera uersus anhelat, 935
pectoraque inuisis obicit fumantia muris;
nec caderet, sed membra uirum terrena relinquunt,
exuiturque animus; paulum si tardius artus
cessissent, potuit fulmen sperare secundum.

Liber Undecimus

Postquam magnanimus furias uirtutis iniquae
consumpsit Capaneus expirauitque receptum
fulmen, et ad terras longe comitata cadentem
signauit muros ultrici semita flammae,
componit dextra uictor concussa plagarum 5
Iuppiter et uultu caelumque diemque reducit.
gratantur superi, Phlegrae ceu fessus anhelet
proelia et Encelado fumantem impresserit Aetnen.
ille iacet lacerae complexus fragmina turris,
toruus adhuc uisu memorandaque facta relinquens 10
gentibus atque ipsi non inlaudata Tonanti.
quantus Apollineae temerator matris Auerno
tenditur; ipsae horrent, si quando pectore ab alto
emergunt uolucres immensaque membra iacentis
spectant, dum miserae crescunt in pabula fibrae: 15
sic grauat iniectus terras hostiliaque urit
arua et anhelantem caelesti sulphure campum.
respirant Thebae, templisque iacentia surgunt
agmina; iam finis uotis finisque supremis
planctibus, et natos ausae deponere matres. 20
at uaga pallentes campo fuga uoluit Achiuos.
nec iam hostes turmae aut ferrum mortale timetur:
omnibus ante oculos irae Iouis, omnibus ardent
arma metu galeaeque tonant, uisusque pauentes
ipse sequi et profugis opponere Iuppiter ignes. 25
instat Agenoreus miles caelique tumultu
utitur: indomitos ut cum Massyla per arua
armenti reges magno leo fregit hiatu
et contentus abit; rauci tunc comminus ursi,
tunc auidi uenere lupi, rabieque remissa 30
lambunt degeneres alienae uulnera praedae.
hinc premit Eurymedon, cui rusticus horror in armis,
rustica tela manu, patriumque agitare tumultus
(Pan illi genitor); tener hinc conatibus annos

egreditur iuuenemque patrem puer aequat Alatreus: 35
felices ambo, sed fortunatior ille,
quem genuisse iuuat; nec iam dinoscere promptum
quae magis arma sonent, quo plus eat hasta lacerto.

artatur denso fugientum examine uallum.
quas uoluis, Gradiue, uices! modo moenia Cadmi 40
scandebant, sua nunc defendunt tecta Pelasgi.
ceu redeunt nubes, ceu circumflantibus Austris
alternus procumbit ager, ceu gurgite cano
nunc reteggit bibulas, nunc induit aestus harenas.
expirat late pubes Tiryntia, alumni 45
exuuias imitata dei; trux maeret ab astris
Amphitryoniades Nemeaea in sanguine terga
et similes ramos similesque uidere pharetras.
stabat in Argolicae ferrato culmine turris
egregius lituo dextri Mauortis Enyeus 50
hortator; sed tunc miseris dabat utile signum
suadebatque fugam et tutos in castra receptus,
cum subitum obliquo descendit ab aere uulnus,
urguentisque sonum laeua manus aure retenta est,
sicut erat; fugit in uacuas iam spiritus auras, 55
iam gelida ora tacent, carmen tuba sola peregit.

iamque potens scelerum geminaeque exercita gentis
sanguine Tisiphone fraterna claudere quaerit
bella tuba: nec se tanta in certamina fidit
sufficere, inferna comitem ni sede Megaeram 60
et consanguineos in proelia suscitet angues.
ergo procul uacua concedit ualle solumque
ense fodit Stygio terraeque inmurmurat absens
nomen et (Elysiis signum indubitabile regnis)
crinalem attollit longo stridore cerasten: 65
caeruleae dux ille comae, quo protinus omnis
horruit audito tellus pontusque polusque,
et pater Aetnaeos iterum respexit ad ignes.
accipit illa sonum; stabat tunc forte parenti
proxima, dum coetu Capaneus laudatur ab omni 70
Ditis et insignem Stygiis fouet amnibus umbram.

protinus abrupta terrarum mole sub astris
constitit, exultant manes, quantumque profundae
rarescunt tenebrae, tantum de luce recessit.
excipit atra soror dextraeque innexa profatur: 75
‘hac, germana, tenus Stygii metuenda parentis
imperia et iussos potui tolerare furores
sola super terras hostilemque obuia mundo,
dum uos Elysium et faciles compescitis umbras.
nec pretium deforme morae cassique labores: 80
hoc quodcumque madent campi, quod sanguine fumant
stagna, quod innumero Lethaea examine gaudet
ripa, meae uires laeta insignia. sed quid
haec ego? Mars habeat, uulgataque iactet Enyo.
uidistis (Stygiis certe manifestus in umbris) 85
sanguine foedatum rictus atroque madentem
ora ducem tabo: miserum insatiabilis edit
me tradente caput. modo nempe horrendus ab astris
descendit uos usque fragor: me sacra premebat
tempestas, ego mixta uiri furialibus armis 90
bella deum et magnas ridebam fulminis iras.
sed iam (effabor enim) longo sudore fatiscunt
corda, soror, tardaeque manus; hebet infera caelo
taxus et insuetos angues nimia astra soporant.
tu, cui totus adhuc furor exultantque recentes 95
Cocyti de fonte comae, da iungere uires.
non solitas acies nec Martia bella paramus,
sed fratrum (licet alma Fides Pietasque repugnent,
uincuntur), fratrum stringendi comminus enses.
grande opus! ipsae odiis, ipsae discordibus armis 100
aptemur. quid lenta uenis? agetum elige cuius
signa feras. ambo faciles nostrique; sed anceps
uulgi et adfatus matris blandamque precatu
Antigonen timeo, paulum ne nostra retardent
consilia. ipse etiam, qui nos lassare precando 105
suetus et ultrices oculorum exposcere Diras,
iam pater est: coetu fertur iam solus ab omni
flere sibi. atque adeo moror ipsa inrumpere Thebas

adsuetumque larem. tibi pareat impius exul,
Argolicumque impelle nefas; neu mitis Adrastus 110
praeualeat plebesque, caue, Lernaean moretur.
uade, et in alternas inimica reuertere pugnas.’

taliam partitae diuersum abiere sorores:
ut Notus et Boreas gemino de cardine mundi,
hic niue Rhipaea, Libycis hic pastus harenis, 115
bella cient: clamant amnes, freta, nubila, siluae,
iamque patent strages; plangunt sua damna coloni
et tamen oppressos miserantur in aequore nautas.
illas ut summo uidit pater altus Olympo
incestare diem trepidumque Hyperionis orbem 120
suffundi maculis, toruo sic incohat ore:
‘uidimus armiferos, quo fas erat usque, furores,
caelicolae, licitasque acies, etsi impia bella
unus init aususque mea procumbere dextra.
nunc par infandum miserisque incognita terris 125
pugna subest: auferte oculos! absentibus ausint
ista deis lateantque Iouem; sat funera mensae
Tantaleae et fontes uidisse Lycaonis aras
et festina polo ducentes astra Mycenae.
nunc etiam turbanda dies: mala nubila, tellus, 130
accipe, secedantque poli: stat parcere mundo
caelitibusque meis; saltem ne uirginis almae
sidera, Ledaui uideant neu talia fratres.’
sic pater omnipotens, uisusque nocentibus aruis
abstulit, et dulci terrae caruere sereno. 135

iamque per Argolicas Erebo sata uirgo cohortes
uestigat Polynicis iter portisque sub ipsis
inuenit, incertum leto tot iniqua fugane
exeat, et dubios turbabant omina sensus.
uiderat, obscura uallum dum nocte pererrat 140
aeger consilii curisque nouissima uoluens,
coniugis Argiae laceram cum lampade maesta
effigiem (sunt monstra deum: sic ire parabat,
has latura uiro taedas erat!): ergo roganti,
quae uia quisue dolor, cur maesta insignia, tantum 145

fleuerat atque manu tacitos auerterat ignes.
scit mentem uidisse nefas; etenim unde Mycenis
adforet et uallum coniunx inopina subiret?
sed fati monitus uicinaque funera sentit,
ac sentire timet. cum uero Acherontis aperti 150
Dira ter admoto tetigit thoraca flagello,
ardet inops animi, nec tam considerare regno
quam scelus et caedem et perfossi in sanguine fratris
expirare cupit, subitusque adfatur Adrastum:
'sera quidem, extremus socium gentisque superstes 155
Argolicae, consulta, pater, iam rebus in artis
adgredior; tunc tempus erat, cum sanguis Achium
integer, ire ultro propriamque capessere pugnam,
non plebis Danaae florem regumque uerendas
obiectare animas, ut lamentabile tantis 160
urbibus induerem capiti decus. ast ea quando
praeteriit uirtus, nunc saltem exoluere fas sit
quae merui. scis namque, socer, licet alta recondas
uulnera et adflictum generi uereare pudorem:
ille ego sum qui te pacem et pia iura regentem 165
(infelix utinamque aliis datus urbibus hospes!)
extorrem patria regnoque++sed exige tandem
supplicium: fratrem suprema in bella (quid horres?
decretum est fixumque) uoco; desiste morari,
nec poteris. non si atra parens miseraeque sorores 170
in media arma cadant, non si ipse ad bella ruenti
obstet et extinctos galeae pater ingerat orbes,
deficiam. anne bibam superest quodcumque cruoris
Inachii et uestris etiamnum mortibus utar?
uidi ego me propter ruptos telluris hiatus, 175
nec subii; uidi exanimum fecique nocentem
Tydea; me Tegee regem indefensa reposcit,
orbaque Parrhasiis ululat mihi mater in antris.
ipse nec Ismeni ripas, dum stagna cruentat
Hippomedon, Tyrias potui nec scandere tures, 180
dum tonat, et tecum, Capaneu, miscere furores.
quis tantus pro luce timor? sed digna rependam.

conueniant ubi quaeque nurus matresque Pelasgae
longaeuique patres, quorum tot gaudia carpsi
orbauique domos: fratri concurro, quid ultra est? 185
spectent et uotis uictorem Eteoclea poscant.
iamque uale, coniunx, dulcesque ualete Mycenae!
at tu, care socer, (nec enim omnis culpa malorum
me penes, et superi mecum Parcaeque nocentes)
sis lenis cineri, meque haec post proelia raptum 190
alitibus fratrique tegas urnamque reportes,
hoc tantum, et natae melius conubia iungas.’

ibant in lacrimas, ueluti cum uere reuerso
Bistoniae tepuere niues, summittitur ingens
Haemus et angustos Rhodope descendit in amnes. 195
coeperat et leni senior mulcere furem
adloquio: scidit orsa nouo terrore cruenta
Eumenis, alipedemque citum fataliaque arma
protinus, Inachii uultus expressa Pherecli,
obtulit ac fidas exclusit casside uoces. 200
ac super haec: ‘abrumpe moras, celeremus! et illum
aduentare ferunt portis.’ sic omnia uicit,
corruptumque iniecit equo; uolat aequore aperto
pallidus instantemque deae circumspicit umbram.

sacra Ioui merito Tyrius pro fulmine ductor 205
nequiquam Danaos ratus exarmasse ferebat.
nec pater aetherius diuumque has ullus ad aras,
sed mala Tisiphone trepidis inserta ministris
astat et inferno praeuertit uota Tonanti.
‘summe deum, tibi namque meae primordia Thebae 210
(liueat infandum licet Argos et aspera Iuno)
debent, Sidonios ex quo per litora raptor
turbasti thiasos, dignatus uirgine nostra
terga premi et placidas falsum mugire per undas.
nec te uana fides iterum Cadmeia adeptum 215
conubia et Tyrios nimium inrupisse penates:
tandem, inquam, soceros dilectaque moenia gratus
respicis adsertorque tonas; ceu regia caeli
attemptata tui, sic te pro turribus altis

uidimus urgumentem nubes, laetique benignum 220
fulmen et auditos proauis agnouimus ignes.
accipe nunc pecudes et magni turis acervos
uotiumque marem; dignas sed pendere grates
haud mortale opus est; certent tibi reddere Bacchus
noster et Alcides, illis haec moenia seruas.’ 225
dixerat: ast illi niger ignis in ora genasque
prosiluit raptumque comis diadema cremauit.
tunc ferus ante ictum spumis delubra cruentat
taurus et obstantum mediis e coetibus exit
turbidus insanoque ferens altaria cornu. 230
diffugiunt famuli, et regem solatur haruspex.
ipse instaurari sacrum male fortis agique
imperat, et magnos ficto premit ore timores.
qualis ubi implicitum Tirynthius ossibus ignem
sensit et Oetaeas membris accedere uestes, 235
uota incepta tamen libataque tura ferebat
durus adhuc patiensque mali; mox grande coactus
ingemuit, uictorque furit per uiscera Nessus.
nuntius exanimi suspensus pectora cursu
Aepytus ad regem portae statione relictas 240
tendit et haec trepido uix intellectus anhelat:
‘ rumpe pios cultus intempestiuoque, rector,
sacra deum: frater muris circum omnibus instat
portarumque moras frenis adsultat et hastis,
nomine te crebro, te solum in proelia poscens. 245
flent maesti retro comites, et uterque loquenti
aggemit et pulsus exercitus obstrepit armis.
ille uocat. nunc tempus erat, sator optime diuum!
quid meruit Capaneus?’ turbatus inhorruit altis
rex odiis, mediaque tamen gauisus in ira est. 250
sic ubi regnator post exulis otia tauri
mugitum hostilem summa tulit aure iuuenus
agnouitque minas, magna stat feruidus ira
ante gregem spumisque animos ardentibus efflat,
nunc pede toruus humum, nunc cornibus aera findens; 255
horret ager, trepidaeque expectant proelia ualles.

nec desunt regni comites: 'sine moenia pulset
 inritus.' 'ille autem fractis huc audeat usque
 uiribus?' 'hic miseris furor est instare periclo,
 nec librare metus et tuta odisse.' 'resiste 260
 hic fretus solio, nos propulsabimus hostem,
 nos bellare iube.' sic proxima turba, sed ardens
 ecce aderat luctu dicturusque omnia belli
 libertate Creon: urit fera corda Menoeceus;
 nulla patri requies, illum quaeritque tenetque; 265
 illum sanguineos proflantem pectore riuos
 aspicit et saeua semper de turre cadentem.
 ut dubium et pugnas cunctantem Eteoclea uidit,
 'ibis' ait 'neque te ulterius fratremque ducemque,
 pessime, funeribus patriae lacrimisque potentem, 270
 Eumenidum bellique reum, patiemur inulti.
 sat tua non aequis luimus periuria diuis.
 urbem armis opibusque grauem et modo ciuibus artam,
 ceu caelo deiecta lues inimicaue tellus,
 hausisti, uacuamque tamen sublimis obumbras? 275
 deest seruitio plebes: hos ignis egentes
 fert humus, hos pelago patrius iam detulit amnis;
 hi quaerunt artus, illi anxia uulnera curant.
 redde agedum miseris fratres natosque patresque,
 redde aruis domibusque uiros! ubi maximus Hypseus 280
 finitimusque Dryas? ubi Phocidos arma sonorae
 Euboicique duces? illos tamen aequa duelli
 fors tulit ad manes: at tu (pudet), hostia regni,
 hostia, nate, iaces, ceu mutus et e grege sanguis
 (ei mihi) primitiis ararum et rite nefasto 285
 libatus iussusque mori: et cunctabitur ultra
 iste nec, aduerso nunc saltem Marte uocatus,
 stabit? an in pugnas alium iubet ire profanus
 Tiresias iterumque meos oracula nectit
 in gemitus? quid enim misero super unicus Haemon? 290
 ille iube subeat, tuque hinc spectator ab alta
 turre sede! quid saeua fremis famulamque cohortem
 respectas? hi te ire uolunt, hi pendere poenas;

ipsa etiam genetrix ipsaeque odere sorores.
in te ardens frater ferrum mortemque minatur 295
saeuaque portarum conuellit claustra, nec audis?’

sic pater infrendens, miseraque exaestuat ira.
ille sub haec, ‘non fallis’ ait ‘nec te incluta nati
fata mouent. canere illa patrem et iactare decebat,
sed spes sub lacrimis, spes atque occulta cupido 300
his latet: insano praetendis funera uoto,
meque premis frustra uacuae ceu proximus aulae.
non ita Sidoniam Fortuna reliquerit urbem,
in te ut sceptrum cadant, tanto indignissime nato.
nec mihi difficilis praesens uindicta++sed arma, 305
arma prius, famuli! coeant in proelia fratres.
uult gemitus lenire Creon. lucrare furorem:
uictori mihi cuncta lues.’ sic iurgia paulum
distulit atque ensem, quem iam dabat ira, repressit.
ictus ut incerto pastoris uulnere serpens 310
erigitur gyro longumque e corpore toto
uirus in ore legit; paulum si deuius hostis
torsit iter, cecidere minae tumefactaque frustra
colla sedent, irasque sui bibit ipse ueneni.

at genetrix, primam funestae sortis ut amens 315
expauit famam (nec tarde credidit), ibat
scissa comam uultusque et pectore nuda cruento,
non sexus decorisue memor: Pentheia qualis
mater ad insani scandebat culmina montis,
promissum saeuo caput adlatura Lyaeo. 320
non comites, non ferre piae uestigia natae
aequa ualent: tantum miserae dolor ultimus addit
robur, et exangues crudescunt luctibus anni.
iamque decus galeae, iam spicula saeua ligabat
ductor et ad lituos hilarem intrepidumque tubarum 325
prospiciebat equum, subito cum apparuit ingens
mater, et ipse metu famulumque expalluit omnis
coetus, et oblatam retro dedit armiger hastam.
‘quis furor? unde iterum regni integrata resurgit
Eumenis? ipsi etiam post omnia, comminus ipsi 330

stabitis? usque adeo geminas duxisse cohortes
et facinus mandasse parum est? quo deinde redibit
uictor? in hosne sinus? o diri coniugis olim
felices tenebrae! datis, improba lumina, poenas:
haec spectanda dies. quo, saeue, minantia flectis 335
ora? quid alternus uultus pallorque ruborque
mutat, et obnixi frangunt mala murmura dentes?
me miseram! uinces? prius haec tamen arma necesse est
experiare domi: stabo ipso in limine portae
auspicium infelix scelerumque inmanis imago. 340
haec tibi canities, haec sunt calcanda, nefande,
ubera, perque uterum sonipes hic matris agendus.
parce: quid oppositam capulo parmaque repellis?
non ego te contra Stygiis feralia sanxi
uota deis, caeco nec Erinyas ore rogavi. 345
exaudi miseram: genetrix te, saeue, precatur,
non pater; adde moram sceleri et metire quod audes.
sed pulsat muros germanus et impia contra
bella ciet? non mater enim, non obstat eunti
ulla soror: te cuncta rogant, hic plangimus omnes; 350
ast ibi uix unus pugnas dissuadet Adrastus,
aut fortasse iubet. tu limina auita deosque
linquis et a nostris in fratrem amplexibus exis?'

at parte ex alia tacitos obstante tumultu
Antigone furata gradus (nec casta retardat 355
uirginitas) uolat Ogygii fastigia muri
exuperare furens; senior comes haeret eunti
Actor, et hic summas non duraturus ad arces.
utque procul uisis paulum dubitauit in armis,
agnouitque (nefas!) iaculis et uoce superba 360
tectata incessentem, magno prius omnia planctu
implet et ex muris ceu descensura profatur:
'comprime tela manu paulumque hanc respice turrem,
frater, et horrentes refer in mea lumina cristas!
agnoscisne hostes? sic annua pacta fidemque 365
poscimus? hi questus, haec est bona causa modesti
exulis? Argolicos per te, germane, penates

(nam Tyriis iam nullus honos), per si quid in illa
dulce domo, summitte animos: en utraque gentis
turba rogant ambaeque acies; rogat illa suorum 370
Antigone deuota malis suspectaque regi,
et tantum tua, dire, soror. saltem ora trucesque
solue genas; liceat uultus fortasse supremum
noscere dilectos et ad haec lamenta uidere
anne fleas. illum gemitu iam supplice mater 375
frangit et exertum dimittere dicitur ensem:
tu mihi fortis adhuc, mihi, quae tua nocte dieque
exilia erroresque fleo iam iamque tumentem
placauit tibi saepe patrem? quid crimine soluis
germanum? nempe ille fidem et stata foedera rupit, 380
ille nocens saeuusque suis; tamen ecce uocatus
non uenit.' his paulum furor elanguescere dictis
coeperat, obstreperet quamquam atque obstaret Erinys;
iam summissa manus, lente iam flectit habenas,
iam tacet; erumpunt gemitus, lacrimasque fatetur 385
cassis; hebet irae, pariterque et abire nocentem
et uenisse pudet: subito cum matre repulsa
Eumenis eiecit fractis Eteoclea portis
clamantem: 'uenio, solumque quod ante uocasti
inuideo; ne incesse moras, grauis arma tenebat 390
mater; io patria, o regum incertissima tellus,
nunc certe uictoris eris!' nec mitior ille,
'tandem,' inquit, 'scis, saeue, fidem et descendis in aequum?
o mihi nunc primum longo post tempore frater,
congregere: hae leges, haec foedera sola supersunt.' 395
sic hostile tuens fratrem; namque uritur alto
corde quod innumeri comites, quod regia cassis
instratusque ostro sonipes, quod fulua metallo
parma micet, quamquam haud armis inhonoris et ipse
nec palla uulgare nitens: opus ipsa nouarat 400
Maeoniis Argia modis ac pollice docto
stamina purpureae sociauerat aurea telae.

iamque in puluereum Furiis hortantibus aequor
prosiliunt, sua quemque comes stimulatque monetque.

frena tenent ipsae phalerasque et lucida comunt 405
arma manu mixtisque iubas serpentibus augment.
stat consanguineum campo scelus, unius ingens
bellum uteri, coeuntque pares sub casside uultus.
signa pauent, siluere tubae, stupefactaque Martis
cornua; ter nigris auidus regnator ab oris 410
intonuit terque ima soli concussit, et ipsi
armorum fugere dei: nusquam incluta Virtus,
restinxit Bellona faces, longeque pauentes
Mars rapuit currus, et Gorgone cruda uirago
abstinit, inque uicem Stygiae rubuere sorores. 415
prominet excelsis uulgus miserabile tectis,
cuncta madent lacrimis et ab omni plangitur arce.
hinc questi uixisse senes, hinc pectore nudo
stant matres paruosque uetant attendere natos.
ipse quoque Ogygios monstra ad gentilia manes 420
Tartareus rector porta iubet ire reclusa.
montibus insidunt patriis tristique corona
infecere diem et uinci sua crimina gaudent.

illos ut stimulis ire in discrimen apertis
audit et sceleri nullum iam obstare pudorem, 425
aduolat et medias inmittit Adrastus habenas,
ipse quidem et regnis multum et uenerabilis aeuo.
sed quid apud tales, quis nec sua pignora curae,
exter honos? tamen ille rogat: 'spectabimus ergo hoc,
Inachidae Tyriique, nefas? ubi iura deique? 430
bella ubi? ne perstate animis. te deprecor, hostis
(quamquam, haec ira sinat, nec tu mihi sanguine longe),
te, gener, et iubeo; sceptri si tanta cupido est,
exuo regales habitus, i, Lernan et Argos
solus habe!' non uerba magis suadentia frangunt 435
accensos sumptisque semel conatibus obstant,
quam Scytha curuatis erectus fluctibus umquam
Pontus Cyaneos uetuit concurrere montes.
ut periisse preces geminoque ad proelia fusos
puluere cornipedes explorarique furentum 440
in digitis ammenta uidet, fugit omnia linquens,

castra, uiros, generum, Thebas, ac fata monentem
conuersumque iugo propellit Ariona: qualis
demissus curru laeuae post praemia sortis
umbrarum custos mundique nouissimus heres 445
palluit, amisso ueniens in Tartara caelo.

non tamen indulsit pugnae cunctataque primo
substitit in scelere et paulum Fortuna morata est.
bis cassae periere uiae, bis comminus actos
auertit bonus error equos, puraeque nefandi 450
sanguinis obliquis ceciderunt ictibus hastae.
tendunt frena manu, saeuis calcaribus urgent
inmeritos; mouet et geminas uenerabile diuum
prodigium turmas, alternaque murmura uoluunt
mussantes: iterare acies, procurrere saepe 455
impetus et totum miseris opponere bellum.

iamdudum terris coetuque offensa deorum
auersa caeli Pietas in parte sedebat,
non habitu quo nota prius, non ore sereno,
sed uittis exuta comam, fraternaue bella, 460
ceu soror infelix pignantum aut anxia mater,
deflebat, saeuumque Iouem Parcasque nocentes
uociferans, seseque polis et luce relictas
descensuram Erebo et Stygios iam malle penates.
'quid me' ait 'ut saeuis animantum ac saepe deorum 465
obstaturam animis, princeps Natura, creabas?
nil iam ego per populos, nusquam reuerentia nostri.
o furor, o homines diraeque Prometheos artes!
quam bene post Pyrrham tellus pontusque uacabant!
en mortale genus!' dixit, speculataque tempus 470
auxilio, 'temptemus' ait 'licet inrita coner,'
desiluitque polo; niueus sub nubibus atris
quamquam maesta deae sequitur uestigia limes.
uix steterat campo, subita mansuescere pace
agmina sentirique nefas; tunc ora madescunt 475
pectoraque, et tacitus subrepsit fratribus horror.
arma etiam simulata gerens cultusque uiriles,
nunc his, nunc illis, 'agite, ite, obsistite,' clamat,

‘quis nati fratresque domi, quis pignora tanta
hic quoque! nonne palam est ultro miserescere diuos? 480
tela cadunt, cunctantur equi, Fors ipsa repugnat.’

nonnihil impulerat dubios, ni torua notasset
Tisiphone fraudes caelestique ocior igne
adforet increpitans: ‘quid belli obuenteris ausis,
numen iners pacique datum? cede, improba: noster 485
hic campus nosterque dies; nunc sera nocentes
defendis Thebas. ubi tunc, cum bella cieret
Bacchus et armatas furiarent orgia matres?
aut ubi segnis eras, dum Martius impia serpens
stagna bibit, dum Cadmus arat, dum uicta cadit Sphinx, 490
dum rogat Oedipoden genitor, dum lampade nostra
in thalamos Iocasta uenit?’ sic urguet, et ultro
uitantem aspectus etiam pudibundaque longe
ora reducentem premit astridentibus hydrys
intentatque faces; deiectam in lumina pallam 495
diua trahit magnoque fugit questura Tonanti.

tunc uero accensae stimulis maioribus irae:
arma placent, uersaeque uolunt spectare cohortes.
instaurant crudele nefas; rex impius aptat
tela et funestae casum prior occupat hastae. 500
illa uiam medium clipei conata per orbem
non perfert ictus atque alto uincitur auro.
tunc exul subit et clare funesta precatur:
‘di, quos effosso non inritus ore rogauit
Oedipodes flammare nefas, non improba posco 505
uota: piabo manus et eodem pectora ferro
rescindam, dum me moriens hic sceptrum tenentem
linquat et hunc secum portet minor umbra dolorem.’
hasta subit uelox equitis femur inter equique
ilia, letum utrique uolens; sed plaga sedentis 510
laxato uitata genu, tamen inrita uoti
cuspis in obliquis inuenit uulnera costis.
it praeceps sonipes strictae contemptor habenae
aruaque sanguineo scribit rutilantia gyro.
exultat fratris credens hunc ille cruorem 515

(credit et ipse metu), totis iamque exul habenis
indulget, caecusque auidos inlidit in aegrum
cornipedem cursus. miscentur frena manusque
telaque, et ad terram turbatis gressibus ambo
praecipitant. ut nocte rates, quas nubilus Auster 520
implicuit, frangunt tonsas mutantque rudentes,
luctataeque diu tenebris hiemique sibique,
sicut erant, imo pariter sedere profundo:
haec pugnae facies. coeunt sine more, sine arte,
tantum animis iraque, atque ignescentia cernunt 525
per galeas odia et uultus rimantur acerbo
lumine: nil adeo mediae telluris, et enses
impliciti innexaeque manus, alternaque saeui
murmura ceu lituos rapiunt aut signa tubarum.
fulmineos ueluti praeceps cum comminus egit 530
ira sues strictisque erexit tergora saetis:
igne tremunt oculi, lunataque dentibus uncis
ora sonant; spectat pugnas de rupe propinqua
uenator pallens canibusque silentia suadet:
sic auidi incurrunt; necdum letalia miscent 535
uulnera, sed coeptus sanguis, facinusque peractum est.
nec iam opus est Furiis; tantum mirantur et astant
laudantes, hominumque dolent plus posse furores.
fratris uterque furens cupit adfectatque cruorem
et nescit manare suum; tandem inruit exul, 540
hortatusque manum, cui fortior ira nefasque
iustius, alte ensem germani in corpore pressit,
qua male iam plumis imus tegit inguina thorax.
ille dolens nondum, sed ferri frigore primo
terratus, in clipeum turbatos colligit artus; 545
mox intellecto magis ac magis aeger anhelat
uulnere. nec parcit cedenti atque increpat hostis:
'quo retrahis, germane, gradus? hoc languida somno,
hoc regnis effeta quies, hoc longa sub umbra
imperia! exilio rebusque exercita egenis 550
membra uides; disce arma pati nec fidere laetis.'
sic pugnant miseri; restabat lassa nefando

uita duci summusque cruor, poterantque parumper
stare gradus; sed sponte ruit fraudemque supremam
in media iam morte parat. clamore Cithaeron 555
erigitur, fraterque ratus uicisse leuauit
ad caelum palmas: 'bene habet! non inrita uoui,
cerno graues oculos atque ora natantia leto.
huc aliquis propere sceptrum atque insigne comarum,
dum uidet.' haec dicens gressus admouit et arma, 560
ceu templis decus et patriae laturus ouanti,
arma etiam spoliare cupit; nondum ille peractis
manibus ultrices animam seruabat in iras.
utque superstantem pronumque in pectora sensit,
erigit occulte ferrum uitaeque labantis 565
reliquias tenues odio suppleuit, et ense
iam laetus fati fraterno in corde reliquit.
ille autem: 'uiuisne an adhuc manet ira superstes,
perfide, nec sedes umquam meriture quietas?
huc mecum ad manes! illic quoque pacta reposcam, 570
si modo Agenorei stat Cnosia iudicis urna,
qua reges punire datur.' nec plura locutus
concidit et totis fratrem grauis obruit armis.

ite truces animae funestaque Tartara leto
polluite et cunctas Erebi consumite poenas! 575
uosque malis hominum, Stygiae, iam parcite, diuae:
omnibus in terris scelus hoc omnique sub aeuo
uiderit una dies, monstrumque infame futuris
excidat, et soli memorent haec proelia reges.

at genitor sceleris comperto fine profundis 580
erupit tenebris saeuoque in limine profert
mortem imperfectam: ueteri stat sordida tabo
utraque canities, et durus sanguine crinis
obnubit furiale caput; procul ora genaeque
intus et effossae squalent uestigia lucis. 585
uirgo autem impositae sustentat pondera laeuae,
dextra sedet baculo. qualis si puppe relict
exosus manes pigri sulcator Auerni
exeat ad superos solemque et pallida turbet

astra, nec ipse diu fortis patiensque superni 590
aeris; interea longum cessante magistro
crescat opus, totisque expectent saecula ripis:
talīs init campum, comitique extrema gementi,
‘duc’ ait ‘ad natos patremque recentibus, oro,
inice funeribus!’ cunctatur nescia uirgo 595
quid paret; impediunt iter implicitosque morantur
arma, uiri, currus, altaque in strage seniles
deficiunt gressus et dux miseranda laborat.
ut quaesita diu monstrauit corpora clamor
uirginis, internit totos frigentibus artus. 600
nec uox ulla seni: iacet inmugitque cruentis
uulneribus, nec uerba diu temptata sequuntur.
dum tractat galeas atque ora latentia quaerit,
tandem muta diu genitor suspiria soluit:
‘tarda meam, Pietas, longo post tempore mentem 605
percutis? estne sub hoc hominis clementia corde?
uincis io miserum, uincis, Natura, parentem!
en habeo gemitus lacrimaeque per arida serpunt
uulnera et in molles sequitur manus impia planctus.
accipite infandae iusta exequialia mortis, 610
crudeles nimiumque mei! nec noscere natos
adloquiumque aptare licet; dic, uirgo, precanti,
quem teneo? quo nunc uestras ego saeuus honore
prosequar inferias? o si fodienda redirent
lumina et in uultus saeuire ex more potestas! 615
heu dolor, heu iusto magis exaudita parentis
uota malaeque preces! quisnam fuit ille deorum,
qui stetit orantem iuxta praereptaque uerba
dictauit Fatis? Furor illa et mouit Erinys
et pater et genetrix et regna oculique cadentes; 620
nil ego: per Ditem iuro dulcesque tenebras
inmeritamque ducem, subeam sic Tartara digna
morte, nec irata fugiat me Laius umbra.
ei mihi, quos nexus fratrum, quae uulnera tracto!
soluite, quaeso, manus infestaque uincula tandem 625
diuidite, et medium nunc saltem admittite patrem.’

talìa dequestus paulatim insumpserat iras
mortis, et occulte telum, nì nata uetaret,
quaerebat; sed cauta manu subtraxerat enses
Antigone. furit inde senex: 'ubi noxia tela? 630
heu Furiae! num totum abiit in corpora ferrum?'
dicentem comes aegra leuat mutumque dolorem
ipsa premit, saeuum gaudens planxisse parentem.

olim autem inceptae clamore exterrita pugnae
regina extulerat notum penetralibus ense, 635
ensem sceptriferi spoliū lacrimabile Lai.
multaque cum superis et diro quēsta cubili
et nati furiis et primi coniugis umbris,
luctata est dextra, et prono uix pectore ferrum
intrauit tandem: uenas perrumpit aniles 640
uulnus et infelix lustratur sanguine lectus.
illius exili stridentem in pectore plagam
Ismene conlapsa super lacrimisque comisque
siccatbat plangens: qualis Marathonide silua
flebilis Erigone caesi prope funera patris 645
questibus absumptis tristem iam soluere nodum
coeperat et fortes ramos moritura legebat.

et iam laeta ducum spes elusisse duorum
res Amphionias alio sceptrumque maligna
transtulerat Fortuna manu, Cadmiquē tenebat 650
iura Creon. miser heu bellorum terminus! illi
pugnarant fratres. hunc et Mauortia clamant
semina, et impensus patriae paulo ante Menoeceus
conciliat populis. scandit fatale tyrannis
flebilis Aoniae solium: pro blanda potestas 655
et sceptri malesuadus amor! numquamne priorum
haerebunt documenta nouis? iuuat ecce nefasto
stare loco regimenque manu tractare cruentum.
quid, melior Fortuna, potes! iam flectere patrem
incipit atque datis abolere Menoecea regnis. 660
primum adeo saeuus imbutus moribus aulae
(indiciū specimenque sui) iubet igne supremo
arceri Danaos, nudoque sub axe relinqui

infelix bellum et tristes sine sedibus umbras.
mox reducem Ogygiae congressus limine portae 665
Oedipodem extimuit paulum, seseque minorem
confessus tacite, promptamque coercuit iram;
sed redit in regem caecumque audentius hostem
increpitans, 'procul,' inquit, 'abi, uictoribus omen
inuisum, et Furias auerte ac moenia lustra 670
discessu Thebana tuo. spes longa peracta est:
uade, iacent nati. quae iam tibi uota supersunt?'

horruit instinctu rabido, steteruntque trementes
ceu uisu praesente genae, seniumque recessit.
tunc natam baculumque manu dimisit, et irae 675
innixus tumido uocem de pectore rumpit:
'iamne uacat saeuire, Creon? modo perfida regna
fortunaeeque locum nostrae, miserande, subisti,
et tibi iam fas est regum calcare ruinas?
iam tumulis uictos, socios iam moenibus arces? 680
macte, potes digne Thebarum sceptras tueri:
haec tua prima dies. sed cur noua contrahis amens
iura? quid anguste tantos metiris honores?
exilium intendis. timida inclementia regum
ista! feros audis quin protinus imbuis enses? 685
crede, licet: ueniat cupidus parere satelles
intrepidusque secet non euitantia colla.
incipere! an expectas ut pronus supplice dextra
sternar et inmitis domini uestigia quaeram?
finge autem temptare, sines? mihine ulla minaris 690
supplicia, aut ullos reris superesse timores?
linquere tecta iubes? caelum terramque reliqui
sponte, atque ultricem crudelis in ora retorsi
non ullo cogente manum: quid tale iubere,
rex inimice, potes? fugio excedoque nefandis 695
sedibus; an refert quo funera longa measque
transportem tenebras? ne non gens cuncta precanti
concedat, patriae quantum miser incubo terrae!
sed dulces Thebae. nimirum hic clarior ortus,
et meliora meos permulcent sidera uultus, 700

hic genetrix natique. habeas Thebana regasque
moenia, quo Cadmus, quo Laius omine rexit
quoque ego; sic thalamos, sic pignora fida capessas;
nec tibi sit uirtus fortunam euadere dextra,
sed lucem deprensus ames. satis omina sanxi, 705
duc age, nata, procul. quid te autem luctibus addo?
da, rex magne, ducem.' timuit miseranda relinqui
Antigone mutatque preces: 'felicia per te
regna, uerende Creon, sanctasque Menoeceos umbras:
da ueniam adflicto dictisque ignosce superbis. 710
hunc morem fandi longae fecere querelae;
nec soli ferus iste tibi: sic fata deosque
adloquitur, durus luctu, facilisque nec ipsi
saepe mihi; pridem indomito sub pectore uiuit
libertas misera et saeuae spes aspera mortis. 715
et nunc ecce tuas inritat callidus iras
suppliciumque cupit; sed tu maioribus, oro,
imperii potiare bonis, altusque iacentes
praetereas, et magna ducum uereare priorum
funera. et hic quondam solio sublimis et armis 720
saepius opem miseris et iura, potentibus aequus
supplicibusque, dabat, cui nunc ex agmine tanto
una comes, necdum exul erat. felicibus hicne
obstat? in hunc odiis et regni uiribus exis,
hunc abigis tectis? an ne prope limina clarum 725
ingemat et uotis intempestius oberret?
pone metum, procul usque tua summotus ab aula
flebit; ego erectum subigam et seruire docebo,
coetibus abducam solaque in sede recondam:
exul erit. nam quae migranti externa patebunt 730
moenia? uis Argos eat hostilesque Mycenae
squalidus inreptet, uictique ad limen Adrastrae
Aonias referat clades, tenuemque precetur
rex Thebanus opem? miserae quid crimina gentis
pandere, quid casus iuuat ostentare pudendos? 735
conde, precor, quodcumque sumus, nec longa precamur
dona, Creon: miserere senis, maestosque parentis

hic, precor, hic manes indulge ponere: certe
Thebanos sepelire licet.' sic orat humique
uoluitur; abducit genitor saeuumque minatur 740
indignans ueniam. qualis leo rupe sub alta,
quem uiridem quondam siluae montesque tremebant,
iam piger et longo iacet exarmatus ab aeuo,
magna tamen facies et non adeunda senectus;
et si demissas ueniat mugitus ad aures, 745
erigitur meminitque sui, uiresque solutas
ingemit et campis alios regnare leones.

flectitur adfatu, sed non tamen omnia rector
supplicis indulget lacrimis partemque recidit
muneris. 'haud,' inquit, 'patriis prohibebere longe 750
finibus, occursu dum non pia templa domosque
commacules. habeant te lustra tuusque Cithaeron;
atque haec ecce tuis tellus habitabilis umbris,
qua bellum geminaeque iacent in sanguine gentes.'
sic ait, et ficto comitum uulgique gementis 755
adsensu limen tumidus regale petebat.

interea pulsi uallum exitiale Pelasgi
destituunt furto; nulli sua signa suusque
ductor: eunt taciti passim et pro funere pulchro
dedecorem amplexi uitam reditusque pudendos. 760
nox fauet et grata profugos amplexitur umbra.

Liber Duodecimus

Nondum cuncta polo uigil inclinauerat astra
ortus et instantem cornu tenuiore uidebat
Luna diem, trepidas ubi iam Tithonia nubes
discutit ac reduci magnum parat aethera Phoebō:
agmina iam raris Dircaea penatibus errant, 5
noctis quæsta moras; quamuis tunc otia tandem
et primus post bella sopor, tamen ægra quietem
pax fugat et sæui meminit uictoria belli.
uix primo proferre gradum et munimina ualli
soluere, uix totas reserare audacia portas; 10
stant ueteres ante ora metus campique uacantis
horror: ut adsiduo iactatis æquore tellus
prima labat, sic attoniti nil comminus ire
mirantur fusasque putant adsurgere turmas.
sic ubi perspicuæ scandentem limina turris 15
Idaliæ uolucres fuluum aspexere draconem,
intus agunt natos et feta cubilia uallant
unguibus imbellesque citant ad proelia pennas;
mox ruerit licet ille retro, tamen æra nudum
candida turba timet, tandemque ingressa uolatus 20
horret et a mediis etiamnum respicit astris.

itur in exanguem populum bellicæ iacentis
reliquias, quacumque dolor luctusque, cruenti,
exegere, duces; hi tela, hi corpora, at illi
caesorum tantum ora uident alienaque iuxta 25
pectora; pars currus deflent uiduisque loquuntur,
hoc solum quia restat, equis; pars oscula figunt
uulneribus magnis et de uirtute queruntur.
frigida digeritur strages: patuere recisæ
cum capulis hastisque manus mediisque sagittæ 30
luminibus stantes; multis uestigia caedis
nulla: ruunt planctu pendente et ubique parato.
at circum informes truncos miserabile surgit
certamen qui iusta ferant, qui funera ducant.

saepe etiam hostiles (lusit Fortuna parumper) 35
decepti fleuere uiros; nec certa facultas
noscere quem miseri uitent calcentue cruorem.
at quibus est inlaesa domus uacuique doloris,
aut deserta uagi Danaum tentoria lustrant
inmittuntque faces, aut (quae post bella uoluptas) 40
quaerunt dispersi iaceat quo puluere Tydeus,
an rapti pateat specus auguris, aut ubi diuum
hostis, an aetheriae uiuant per membra fauillae.
iam lacrimis exempta dies, nec serus abegit
Vesper: amant miseri lamenta malisque fruuntur. 45
nec subiere domos, sed circum funera pernox
turba sedet, uicibusque datis alterna gementes
igne feras planctuque fugant; nec dulcibus astris
uicta, nec adsiduo coierunt lumina fletu.
tertius Aurorae pugnabat Lucifer, et iam 50
montibus orbatis, lucorum gloria, magnae
Teumesi uenere trabes et amica Cithaeron
silua rogis; ardent excisae uiscera gentis
molibus extructis: supremo munere gaudent
Ogygii manes; queritur miserabile Graium 55
nuda cohors uetitumque gemens circumuolat ignem.
accipit et saeui manes Eteoclis iniquos
haudquaquam regalis honos; Argiuis haberi
frater iussus adhuc atque exule pellitur umbra.

at non plebeio fumare Menoecea busto 60
rex genitor Thebaeque sinunt, nec robora uilem
struxerunt de more rogum, sed bellicus agger
curribus et clipeis Graiorumque omnibus armis
sternitur; hostiles super ipse, ut uictor, acruos
pacifera lauro crinem uittisque decorus 65
accubat: haud aliter quam cum poscentibus astris
laetus in accensa iacuit Tirynthius Oeta.
spirantes super inferias, captiua Pelasgum
corpora frenatosque, pater, solacia sorti
bellorum, mactabat equos; his arduus ignis 70
palpitat, et gemitus tandem erupere paterni:

‘o nisi magnanimae nimius te laudis inisset
ardor, Echionios mecum uenerande penates
atque ultra recture puer, uenientia qui nunc
gaudia et ingratum mihi munus acerbis! 75
tu superum conuexa licet coetusque perenni
(credo equidem) uirtute colas, mihi flebile semper
numen eris; ponant aras excelsaque Thebae
templa dicent: uni fas sit lugere parenti.
et nunc heu quae digne tibi sollemnia quasue 80
largiar exequias? nec si fatale potestas
Argos et impulsas cineri miscere Mycenae,
meque super, cui uita (nefas!) et sanguine nati
partus honos. eademne dies, eadem impia bella
te, puer, et diros misere in Tartara fratres? 85
et nunc Oedipodi par est fortuna doloris
ac mihi? quam similes gemimus, bone Iuppiter, umbras!
accipe, nate, tui noua libamenta triumphi,
accipe et hoc regimen dextrae frontisque superbae
uincula, quae patri minimum laetanda dedisti. 90
regem te, regem tristes Eteocleos umbrae
aspiciant.’ simul haec dicens crinemque manumque
destruit, accensaue iterat uiolentius ira:
‘saeuum aedum inमितemque uocent si funera Lernaee
tecum ardere ueto; longos utinam addere sensus 95
corporibus caeloque animas Ereboque nocentes
pellere fas, ipsumque feras, ipsum unca uolucrum
ora sequi atque artus regum monstrare nefandos!
ei mihi, quod positos humus alma diesque resoluet!
quare iterum repetens iterumque edico: suprema 100
ne quis ope et flammis ausit uiuuisse Pelasgos;
aut nece facta luet numeroque explebit adempta
corpora; per superos magnumque Menoeceia iuro.’
dixit, et abreptum comites in tecta ferebant.

flebilis interea uacuis comitatus ab Argis 105
(fama trahit miseras) orbae uiduaeque ruebant
Inachides ceu capta manus; sua uulnera cuique,
par habitus cunctis, deiecti in pectora crines

accinctique sinus; manant lacera ora cruentis
unguibus, et molles planctu creuere lacerti. 110
prima per attonitas nigrae regina cateruae,
tristibus inlabens famulis iterumque resurgens,
quaerit inops Argia uias; non regia cordi,
non pater: una fides, unum Polynicis amati
nomen in ore sedet; Dircen infaustaue Cadmi 115
moenia posthabitis uelit incoluisse Mycenis.
proxima Lernaeo Calydonidas agmine mixtas
Tydeos exequiis trahit haud cessura sorori
Deipyle; scelus illa quidem morsusque profanos
audierat miseranda uiri, sed cuncta iacenti 120
infelix ignoscit amor. post aspera uisu,
ac deflenda tamen, digno plangore Nealce
Hippomedonta ciens. uatis mox impia coniunx
heu uacuos positura rogos. postrema gementum
agmina Maenaliae ducit comes orba Dianae, 125
et grauis Euadne: dolet haec queriturque labores
audacis pueri, magni memor illa mariti
it toruum lacrimans summisque irascitur astris.
illas et lucis Hecate speculata Lycaeis
prosequitur gemitu, duplexque ad litus euntes 130
planxit ab Isthmiaco genetrix Thebana sepulcro,
noctiuagumque gregem, quamuis sibi luget, Eleusin
fleuit et arcanos errantibus extulit ignes.
ipsa per auersos ducit Saturnia calles
occultatque uias, ne plebs congressa suorum 135
ire uetet pereatque ingentis gloria coepti.
nec non functa ducum refouendi corpora curam
Iris habet, putresque arcanis roribus artus
ambrosiaeque rigat sucis, ut longius obstent
expectentque rogam et flammas non ante fatiscant. 140
squalidus ecce genas et inani uulnere pallens
Ornytus (hic socio desertus ab agmine, tardat
plaga recens) timido secreta per auia furto
debile carpit iter fractaeque innititur hastae.
isque ubi mota nouo stupuit loca sola tumultu 145

femineumque gregem, quae iam super agmina Lernaes
sola uidet, non ille uiam causasue requirit,
quippe patent, maesto sed sic prior occupat ore:
‘quo, miserae, quo fertis iter? funusne peremptis
speratis cineremque uiris? stat peruigil illic 150
umbrarum custos inhumataque corpora regi
adnumerat. nusquam lacrimae, procul usque fugati
accessus hominum: solis auibusque ferisque
ire licet. uestrisne Creon dabit aequus honorem
luctibus? inmites citius Busiridos aras 155
Odrysiique famem stabuli Siculosque licebit
exorare deos; rapiet fortasse precantes,
si mens nota mihi, nec coniugialia supra
funera sed caris longe mactabit ab umbris.
quin fugitis, dum tuta uia est, Lernamque reuersae 160
nomina, quod superest, uacuis datis orba sepulcris
absentesque animas ad inania busta uocatis?
aut uos Cecropiam (prope namque et Thesea fama est
Thermodontiaci laetum remeare triumpho)
imploratis opem? bello cogendus et armis 165
in mores hominemque Creon.’ sic fatus, at illis
horruerunt lacrimae, stupuitque inmanis eundi
impetus, atque uno uultus pallore gelati.
non secus adflauit molles si quando iuuenas
tigridis Hyrcanae ieiunum murmur, et ipse 170
auditu turbatus ager, timor omnibus ingens
quae placeat, quos illa fames escendat in armos.

continuo discors uario sententia motu
scinditur: his Thebas tumidumque ambire Creonta,
his placet Actaeae si quid clementia gentis 175
adnuat; extremum curarum ac turpe reuerti.
hic non femineae subitum uirtutis amorem
colligit Argia, sexuque inmane relicto
tractat opus: placet (egregii spes dura pericli!)
comminus infandi leges accedere regni, 180
quo Rhodopes non ulla nurus nec alumna niuosi
Phasidis innuptis uallata cohortibus iret.

tunc mouet arte dolum, quo semet ab agmine fido
segreget, inmitesque deos regemque cruentum
contemptrix animae et magno temeraria luctu 185
prouocet; hortantur pietas ignesque pudici.
ipse etiam ante oculos omni manifestus in actu,
nunc hospes miserae, primas nunc sponsus ad aras,
nunc mitis coniunx, nunc iam sub casside torua
maestus in amplexu multumque a limine summo 190
respiens: sed nulla animo uersatur imago
crebrior Aonii quam quae de sanguine campi
nuda uenit poscitque rogos. his anxia mentem
aegrescit furiis et, qui castissimus ardor,
funus amat; tunc ad comites conuersa Pelasgas, 195
'uos' ait 'Actaeas acies Marathonique arma
elice, aspiretque pio Fortuna labori.
me sinite Ogygias, tantae quae sola ruinae
causa fui, penetrare domos et fulmina regni
prima pati; nec surda ferae pulsabimus urbis 200
limina: sunt illic soceri mihi suntque sorores
coniugis, et Thebas haud ignoranda subibo.
ne tantum reuocate gradus: illo impetus ingens
auguriumque animi.' nec plura, unumque Menoeten
(olim hic uirginei custos monitorque pudoris) 205
eligit et, quamquam rudis atque ignara locorum,
praecipites gressus, qua uenerat Ornytus, aufert.
atque ubi uisa procul socias liquisse malorum,
'anne' ait 'hostiles ego te tabente per agros
(heu dolor!) expectem quaenam sententia lenti 210
Theseos, an bello procures, an dexter haruspex
aduat? interea funus decrescit, et uncis
alitibus (non hos potius?) supponimus artus.
et nunc me duram, si quis tibi sensus ad umbras,
me tardam Stygiis quereris, fidissime, diuis. 215
heu si nudus adhuc, heu si iam forte sepultus:
nostrum utrumque nefas; adeo uis nulla dolenti?
Mors nusquam saeuusque Creon? hortaris euntem,
Ornyte!' sic dicens magno Megareia praeceps

arua rapit passu, demonstrat proxima quisque 220
 obuius horrescitque habitus miseramque ueretur.
 uadit atrox uisu, nil corde nec aure pauescens,
 et nimiis confisa malis propiorque timeri:
 nocte uelut Phrygia cum lamentata resultant
 Dindyma, pinigeri rapitur Simoentis ad amnem 225
 dux uesana chori, cuius dea sanguine lecto
 ipsa dedit ferrum et uittata fronde notauit.
 iam pater Hesperio flagrantem gurgite currum
 abdiderat Titan, aliis rediturus ab undis,
 cum tamen illa grauem luctu fallente laborem 230
 nescit abisse diem: nec caligantibus aruis
 terretur, nec frangit iter per et inuia saxa
 lapsurasque trabes nemorumque arcana (sereno
 nigra die) caecisque incisa noualia fossis,
 per fluuios secura uadi, somnosque ferarum 235
 praeter et horrendis infesta cubilia monstros.
 tantum animi luctusque ualent! pudet ire Menoeten
 tardius, inualidaeque gradum miratur alumnae.
 quas non illa domos pecudumque hominumque modesto
 pulsauit gemitu? quotiens amissus eunti 240
 limes, et errantem comitis solacia flammae
 destituunt gelidaeque facem uicere tenebrae!
 iamque supinantur fessis lateque fatiscunt
 Penthei deuexa iugi, cum pectore anhelio
 iam prope deficiens sic incipit orsa Menoetes: 245
 ‘haud procul, exacti si spes non blanda laboris,
 Ogygias, Argia, domos et egena sepulcri
 busta iacere reor: graue comminus aestuat aer
 sordidus, et magnae redeunt per inane uolucres.
 haec illa est crudelis humus, nec moenia longe. 250
 cernis ut ingentes murorum porrigat umbras
 campus et e speculis moriens intermicet ignis?
 moenia sunt iuxta.’ modo nox magis ipsa tacebat,
 solaue nigrantes laxabant astra tenebras.
 horruit Argia, dextramque ad moenia tendens: 255
 ‘urbs optata prius, nunc tecta hostilia, Thebae,

et tamen, inlaesas si reddis coniugis umbras,
sic quoque dulce solum, cernis quo praedita cultu,
qua stipata manu, iuxta tua limina primum
Oedipodis magni uenio nurus? improba non sunt 260
uota: rogos hospes planctumque et funera posco.
illum, oro, extorrem regni belloque fugatum,
illum, quem solio non es dignata paterno,
redde mihi. tuque, oro, ueni, si manibus ulla
effigies errantque animae post membra solutae, 265
tu mihi pande uias, tuaque ipse ad funera deduc,
si merui.' dixit, tectumque adgressa propinquae
pastorale casae reficit spiramina fessi
ignis, et horrendos inrumpit turbida campos.
qualis ab Aetnaeis accensa lampade saxis 270
orba Ceres magnae uariabat imagine flammae
Ausonium Siculumque latus, uestigia nigri
raptoris uastosque legens in puluere sulcos;
illius insanis ululatibus ipse remugit
Enceladus ruptoque uias inluminat igni: 275
Persephonen amnes siluae freta nubila clamant,
Persephonen tantum Stygii tacet aula mariti.

admonet attonitam fidus meminisse Creontis
altor et occulto summittere lampada furto.
regina Argolicas modo formidata per urbes, 280
uotum inmane procis spesque augustissima gentis,
nocte sub infesta, nullo duce et hoste propinquo,
sola per offensus armorum et lubrica tabo
gramina, non tenebras, non circumfusa tremescens
concilia umbrarum atque animas sua membra gementes, 285
saepe gradu caeco ferrum calcataque tela
dissimulat, solusque labor uitasse iacentes,
dum funus putat omne suum, uisuque sagaci
rimatur positos et corpora prona supinat
incumbens, queriturque parum lucentibus astris. 290

forte soporiferas caeli secreta per umbras
Iuno, sinu magni semet furata mariti,
Theseos ad muros, ut Pallada flecteret, ibat,

supplicibusque piis faciles aperiret Athenas.
atque ubi per campos errore fatiscere uano 295
inmeritam Argian supero respexit ab axe,
indoluit uisu, et lunaribus obuia bigis
aduertit uultum placidaque ita uoce locuta est:
‘da mihi poscenti munus breue, Cynthia, si quis
est Iunonis honos; certe Iouis improba iussu 300
ter noctem Herculeam++ueteres sed mitto querelas:
en locus officio. cultrix placitissima nostri
Inachis Argia cernis qua nocte uagetur
nec reperire uirum densis queat aegra tenebris?
et tibi nimbosum languet iubar: exere, quaeso, 305
cornua, et adsueto propior premat orbita terras.
hunc quoque, qui curru madidas tibi pronus habenas
ducit, in Aonios uigiles demitte Soporem.’
uix ea, cum scissis magnum dea nubibus orbem
protulit; expauere umbrae, fulgorque recisus 310
sideribus; uix ipsa tulit Saturnia flammās.

primum per campos infuso lumine pallam
coniugis ipsa suos nescit miseranda labores,
quamquam texta latent suffusaque sanguine maeret
purpura; dumque deos uocat et de funere caro 315
hoc superesse putat, uidet ipsum in puluere paene
calcatum. fugere animus uisusque sonusque,
inclusitque dolor lacrimas; tum corpore toto
sternitur in uultus animamque per oscula quaerit
absentem, pressumque comis ac ueste cruorem 320
seruatura legit. mox tandem uoce reuersa:
‘hunc ego te, coniunx, ad debita regna profectum
ductorem belli generumque potentis Adraſti
aspicio, talisque tuis occurro triumphis?
huc attolle genas defectaque lumina: uenit 325
ad Thebas Argia tuas; age, moenibus induc
et patrios ostende lares et mutua redde
hospitia. heu quid ago? proiectus caespite nudo
hoc patriae telluris habes. quae iurgia? certe
imperium non frater habet! nullasne tuorum 330

mouisti lacrimas? ubi mater, ubi incluta fama
Antigone? mihi nempe iaces, mihi uictus es uni!
dicebam: “quo tendis iter? quid sceptrum negata
poscis? habes Argos, soceri regnabis in aula;
hic tibi longus honos, hic indiuisa potestas.” 335
quid queror? ipsa dedi bellum maestumque rogavi
ipsa patrem ut talem nunc te complexa tenerem.
sed bene habet, superi, gratum est, Fortuna; peracta
spes longinqua uiae: totos inuenimus artus.
ei mihi, sed quanto descendit uulnus hiatu! 340
hoc frater? qua parte, precor, iacet ille nefandus
praedator? uincam uolucres (sit adire potestas)
excludamque feras; an habet funestus et ignes?
sed nec te flammis inopem tua terra uidebit:
ardebis lacrimasque feres quas ferre negatum 345
regibus, aeternumque tuo famulata sepulcro
durabit deserta fides, testisque dolorum
natus erit, paruoque torum Polynice fouebo.’

ecce alios gemitus aliamque ad busta ferebat
Antigone miseranda facem, uix nacta petitos 350
moenibus egressus; illam nam tempore in omni
attendunt uigiles et rex iubet ipse timeri,
contractaeque uices et crebrior excubat ignis.
ergo deis fratrique moras excusat et amens,
ut paulum inmisso cessit statio horrida somno, 355
erumpit muris: fremitu quo territat agros
uirginis ira leae, rabies cui libera tandem
et primus sine matre furor. nec longa morata,
quippe trucem campum et positus quo puluere frater
nouerat. atque illam contra uidet ire Menoetes, 360
cui uacat, et carae gemitus compescit alumnae.
cum tamen erectas extremus uirginis aures
accessit sonus, utque atra sub ueste comisque
squalentem et crasso foedatam sanguine uultus
astrorum radiis et utraque a lampade uidit, 365
‘cuius’ ait ‘manes, aut quae temeraria quaeris
nocte mea?’ nihil illa diu, sed in ora mariti

deicit inque suos pariter uelamina uultus,
capta metu subito paulumque oblita doloris.
hoc magis increpitans suspecta silentia perstat 370
Antigone, comitemque premens ipsamque; sed ambo
deficiunt fixique silent. tandem ora retextit
Argia, corpusque tamen complexa profatur:
‘si quid in hoc ueteri bellorum sanguine mecum
quaesitura uenis, si tu quoque dura Creontis 375
iussa times, possum tibi me confisa fateri.
si misera es (certe lacrimas lamentaque cerno),
iunge, age, iunge fidem: proles ego regis Adrasti
(ei mihi! num quis adest?) cari Polynicis ad ignes,
etsi regna uetant++’ stupuit Cadmeia uirgo 380
intremuitque simul dicentemque occupat ultro:
‘mene igitur sociam (pro fors ignara!) malorum,
mene times? mea membra tenes, mea funera plangis.
cedo, tene, pudet heu! pietas ignaua sororis!
haec prior++’ hic pariter lapsae iunctoque per ipsum 385
amplexu miscent auidae lacrimasque comasque,
partitaeque artus redeunt alterna gementes
ad uultum et cara uicibus ceruice fruuntur.
dumque modo haec fratrem memorat, nunc illa maritum,
mutuaeque exorsae Thebas Argosque renarrant, 390
longius Argia miseros reminiscitur actus:
‘per tibi furtiui sacrum commune doloris,
per socios manes et conscia sidera iuro:
non hic amissos, quamquam uagus exul, honores,
non gentile solum, carae non pectora matris, 395
te cupiit unam noctesque diesque locutus
Antigonen; ego cura minor facilisque relinqui.
tu tamen ex celsa sublimem forsitan arce
ante nefas Graias dantem uexilla manipulis
uidisti, teque ille acie respexit ab ipsa 400
ense salutatam et nutantis uertice coni:
nos procul. extremas sed quis deus egit in iras?
nil uestrae ualuere preces? tibine iste negauit
oranti?’ causas ac tristia reddere fata

coeperat Antigone; fidus comes admonet ambas: 405
'heia agite inceptum potius! iam sidera pallent
uicino turbata die, perferte laborem,
tempus erit lacrimis, accenso flebitis igne.'

haud procul Ismeni monstrabant murmura ripas,
qua turbatus adhuc et sanguine decolor ibat. 410
huc laceros artus socio conamine portant
inualidae, iungitque comes non fortior ulnas.
sic Hyperionium trepido Phaethonta sorores
fumantem lauere Pado; uixdum ille sepulcro
conditus, et flentes stabant ad flumina siluae. 415
ut sanies purgata uado membrisque reuersus
mortis honos, ignem miserae post ultima quaerunt
oscula; sed gelidae circum exanimesque fauillae
putribus in foueis, atque omnia busta quiescunt.
stabat adhuc, seu forte, rogos, seu numine diuum, 420
cui torrere datum saeuos Eteocleos artus,
siue locum monstris iterum Fortuna parabat,
seu dissensuros seruauerat Eumenis ignes.
hic tenuem nigris etiamnum adiuuere lucem
roboribus pariter cupidae uidere, simulque 425
flebile gauisae; nec adhuc quae busta repertum,
sed placidus quicumque rogant mitisque supremi
admittat cineris consortem et misceat umbras.

ecce iterum fratres: primos ut contigit artus
ignis edax, tremuere rogi et nouus aduena busto 430
pellitur; exundant diuiso uertice flammae
alternosque apices abrupta luce coruscant.
pallidus Eumenidum ueluti commiserit ignes
Orcus, uterque minax globus et conatur uterque
longius; ipsae etiam commoto pondere paulum 435
secessere trabes. conclamat territa uirgo:
'occidimus, functasque manu stimulauimus iras.
frater erat; quis enim accessus ferus hospitis umbrae
pelleret? en clipei fragmen semustaque nosco
cingula, frater erat! cernisne ut flamma recedat 440
concurratque tamen? uiuunt odia improba, uiuunt.

nil actum bello; miseri, sic dum arma mouetis
uicit nempe Creon! nusquam iam regna: quis ardor?
cui furitis? sedate minas; tuque exul ubique,
semper inops aequi, iam cede (hoc nupta precatur, 445
hoc soror), aut saeuos mediae ueniemus in ignes.'

uix ea, cum subitus campos tremor altaque tecta
impulit adiuuatque rogi discordis hiatus,
et uigilum turbata quies, quibus ipse malorum
fingebat simulacra Sopor: ruit ilicet omnem 450
prospectum lustrans armata indagine miles.
illos instantes senior timet unus; at ipsae
ante rogam saeuique palam spreuisse Creontis
imperia et furtum claro plangore fatentur
securae, quippe omne uident fluxisse cadauer. 455
ambitur saeua de morte animosaque leti
spes furit: haec fratris rapuisse, haec coniugis artus
contendunt uicibusque probant: 'ego corpus', 'ego ignes',
'me pietas', 'me duxit amor'. deponere saeua
supplicia et dextras iuuat insertare catenis. 460
nusquam illa alternis modo quae reuerentia uerbis,
iram odiumque putes; tantus discordat utrimque
clamor, et ad regem qui deponere trahuntur.

at procul Actaeis dextra iam Pallade muris
Iuno Phoroneas inducit praeuia matres 465
attonitas, non ipsa minus, coetumque gementem
conciliat populis et fletibus addit honorem.
ipsa manu ramosque oleae uittasque precantes
tradit, et obtenta summittere lumina palla
et praeferre docet uacuas sine manibus urnas. 470
omnis Erectheis effusa penetibus aetas
tectas uiasque replent: unde hoc examen et una
tot miserae? necdum causas nouere malorum,
iamque gemunt. dea conciliis se miscet utrisque
cuncta docens, qua gente satae, quae funera plangant 475
quidue petant; uariis nec non adfatis ipsae
Ogygias leges inmansuetumque Creonta
multum et ubique fremunt. Geticae non plura queruntur

hospitibus tectis trunco sermone uolucres,
cum duplices thalamos et iniquum Terea clamant. 480

urbe fuit media nulli concessa potentum
ara deum, mitis posuit Clementia sedem,
et miseri fecere sacram; sine supplice numquam
illa nouo, nulla damnauit uota repulsa.
auditi quicumque rogant, noctesque diesque 485
ire datum et solis numen placare querelis.
parca superstitio: non turea flamma nec altus
accipitur sanguis: lacrimis altaria sudant,
maestarumque super libamina secta comarum
pendent et uestes mutata sorte relictæ. 490
mite numus circa cultuque insigne uerendo,
uittatae laurus et supplicis arbor oliuæ.
nulla autem effigies, nulli commissæ metallo
forma dei: mentes habitare et pectora gaudet.
semper habet trepidos, semper locus horret egenis 495
coetibus, ignotæ tantum felicibus aræ.
fama est defensos acie post busta paterni
numinis Herculeos sedem fundasse nepotes.
fama minor factis: ipsos nam credere dignum
caelicolas, tellus quibus hospita semper Athenæ, 500
ceu leges hominemque nouum ritusque sacrorum
seminaque in uacuas hinc descendentiæ terras,
sic sacrasse loco commune animantibus ægris
confugium, unde procul starent iræque minæque
regnaque, et a iustis Fortuna recederet aris. 505
iam tunc innumerae norant altaria gentes:
huc uicti bellis patriaque a sede fugati
regnorumque inopes scelerumque errore nocentes
conueniunt pacemque rogant; mox hospita sedes
uicit et Oedipodæ Furiæ et funus ~olynthi 510
textit et a misero matrem summouit Oreste.
huc uulgo monstrante locum manus anxia Lernæ
deueniunt, cedunt miserorum turba priorum.
uix ibi, sedatis requierunt pectora curis:
ceu patrio super alta grues Aquilone fugatæ 515

cum uidere Pharon; tunc aethera latius implent,
tunc hilari clangore sonant; iuuat orbe sereno
contempsisse niues et frigora soluere Nilo.

iamque domos patrias Scythicae post aspera gentis
proelia laurigero subeuntem Thesea curru 520
laetifici plausus missusque ad sidera uulgi
clamor et emeritis hilaris tuba nuntiat armis.
ante ducem spolia et, duri Mauortis imago,
uirginei currus cumulataque fercula cristis
et tristes ducuntur equi truncaequae bipennes, 525
quis nemora et solidam Maeotida caedere suetae,
gorytique leues portantur et ignea gemmis
cingula et informes dominarum sanguine peltae.
ipsae autem nondum trepidae sexumue fatentur,
nec uulgare gemunt, aspernanturque precari, 530
et tantum innuptae quaerunt delubra Mineruae.
primus amor niueis uictorem cernere uectum
quadriiugis; nec non populos in semet agebat
Hippolyte, iam blanda genas patiensque mariti
foederis. hanc patriae ritus fregisse seueros 535
Atthides oblique secum mirantur operto
murmure, quod nitidi crines, quod pectora palla
tota latent, magnis quod barbara semet Athenis
misceat atque hosti ueniat paritura marito.

paulum et ab insessis maestae Pelopeides aris 540
promouere gradum seriemque et dona triumphii
mirantur, uictique animo rediere mariti.
atque ubi tardauit currus et ab axe superbo
explorat causas uictor poscitque benigna
aure preces, ausa ante alias Capaneia coniunx: 545
'belliger Aegide, subitae cui maxima laudis
semina de nostris aperit Fortuna ruinis,
non externa genus, dirae nec conscia noxae
turba sumus: domus Argos erat regesque mariti,
non utinam et fortes! quid enim septena mouere 550
castra et Agenoreos opus emendare penates?
nec querimur caesos: haec bellica iura uicesque

armorum; sed non Siculis exorta sub antris
monstra nec Ossaei bello cecidere bimembres.
mitto genus clarosque patres: hominum, inclute Theseu, 555
sanguis erant, homines, eademque in sidera, eosdem
sortitus animarum alimentaue uestra creati,
quos uetat igne Creon Stygiaeque a limine portae,
ceu sator Eumenidum aut Lethaei portitor amnis,
sum mouet ac dubio caelique Erebiue sub axe 560
detinet. heu princeps Natura! ubi numina, ubi ille
fulminis iniusti iaculator? ubi estis, Athenae?
septima iam surgens trepidis Aurora iacentes
auersatur equis; radios declinat et horret
stelligeri iubar omne poli; iam comminus ipsae 565
pabula dira ferae campumque odere uolucres
spirantem tabo et caelum uentosque grauantiem.
quantum etenim superesse rear? nuda ossa putremque
uerrere permittat saniem. properate, uerendi
Cecropidae; uos ista decet uindicta, priusquam 570
Emathii Thracesque dolent, quaeque extat ubique
gens arsura rogis manesque habitura supremos.
nam quis erit saeuire modus? bellauimus, esto;
sed cecidere odia et tristes mors obruit iras.
tu quoque, ut egregios fama cognouimus actus, 575
non trucibus monstris Sinin infandumque dedisti
Cercyona, et saeuum uelles Scirona crematum.
credo et Amazoniis Tanain fumasse sepulcris,
unde haec arma refers; sed et hunc dignare triumphum.
da terris unum caeloque Ereboque laborem, 580
si patrium Marathona metu, si tecta leuasti
Cresia, nec fudit uanos anus hospita fletus.
sic tibi non ullae socia sine Pallade pugnae,
nec sacer inuideat paribus Tirynthius actis,
semper et in curru, semper te mater ouantem 585
cernat, et inuictae nil tale precentur Athenae.'

dixerat; excipiunt cunctae tenduntque precantes
cum clamore manus; rubuit Neptunius heros
permotus lacrimis; iusta mox concitus ira

exclamat: 'quaenam ista nouos induxit Erinys 590
regnorum mores? non haec ego pectora liqui
Graiorum abscedens, Scythiam Pontumque niualem
cum peterem; nouus unde furor? uictumne putasti
Thesea, dire Creon? adsum, nec sanguine fessum
crede; sitit meritos etiamnum haec hasta cruores. 595
nulla mora est; uerte hunc adeo, fidissime Phegeu,
cornipedem, et Tyrias inuectus protinus arces
aut Danaïs edice rogos aut proelia Thebis.'
sic ait oblitus bellicae uiaeque laborum,
hortaturque suos uiresque instaurat anhelas: 600
ut modo conubiis taurus saltuque recepto
cum posuit pugnās, alio si forte remugit
bellatore nemus, quamquam ora et colla cruento
imbre madent, nouus arma parat campumque lacessens
dissimulat gemitus et uulnera puluere celat. 605
ipsa metus Libycos seruatricemque Medusam
pectoris incussa mouit Tritonia parma.
protinus erecti toto simul agmine Thebas
respexere angues; necdum Atticus ire parabat
miles, et infelix expauit classica Dirce. 610
continuo in pugnās haud solum accensa iuuentus
qui modo Caucasei comites rediere triumphī:
omnis ad arma rudes ager extimulauit alumnos.
conueniunt ultroque ducis uexilla sequuntur,
qui gelidum Braurona uiri, qui rura lacessunt 615
Monychīa et trepidis stabilem Piraea nautis
et nondum Eoo clarum Marathona triumpho.
mittit in arma manus gentilibus hospita diuis
Icarii Celeique domus uiridesque Melaenae,
diues et Aegaleos nemorum Parnesque benignus 620
uitibus et pingui melior Lycabessos oliuae.
uenit atrox Alaeus et olentis arator Hymetti,
quaeque rudes thyrsos hederis uestistis, Acharnae.
linquitur Eois longe speculabile proris
Sunion, unde uagi casurum in nomina ponti 625
Cresia decepit falso ratis Aegea uelo.

hos Salamis populos, illos Cerealis Eleusin
horrida suspensis ad proelia misit aratri,
et quos Callirhoe nouies errantibus undis
implicat, et raptae qui conscius Orithyiae 630
celauit ripis Geticos Ilissos amores.
ipse quoque in pugnas uacuatur collis, ubi ingens
lis superum, dubiis donec noua surgeret arbor
rupibus et longa refugum mare frangeret umbra.
isset et Arctoas Cadmea ad moenia ducens 635
Hippolyte turmas: retinet iam certa tumentis
spes uteri, coniunxque rogat dimittere curas
Martis et emeritas thalamo sacrare pharetras.

hos ubi uelle acies et dulci gliscere ferro
dux uidet, utque piis raptim dent oscula natis 640
amplexusque breues, curru sic fatur ab alto:
'terrarum leges et mundi foedera mecum
defensura cohors, dignas insumite mentes
coeptibus: hac omnem diuumque hominumque fauorem
Naturamque ducem coetusque silentis Auerni 645
stare palam est; illic Poenarum exercita Thebis
agmina et anguicomae ducent uexilla sorores.
ite alacres tantaeque, precor, confidite causae.'
dixit, et emissa praeceps iter incohat hasta:
qualis Hyperboreos ubi nubilus institit axes 650
Iuppiter et prima tremefecit sidera bruma,
rumpitur Aeolia et longam indignata quietem
tollit hiems animos uentosaque sibilat Arctos;
tunc montes undaeque fremunt, tunc proelia caecis
nubibus et tonitrus insanaque fulmina gaudent. 655

icta gemit tellus, uirides grauis ungula campos
mutat, et innumeris peditumque equitumque cateruis
expirat protritum ager, nec puluere crasso
armorum lux uicta perit, sed in aethera longum
frangitur, et mediis ardent in nubibus hastae. 660
noctem adeo placidasque operi iunxere tenebras,
certamenque inmane uiris quo concita tendunt
agmina: quis uisas proclamet ab aggere Thebas,

cuius in Ogygio stet princeps lancea muro.
at procul ingenti Neptunius agmina Theseus 665
angustat clipeo, propriaeque exordia laudis
centum urbes umbone gerit centenaque Cretae
moenia, seque ipsum monstrosi ambagibus antri
hispidam torquentem luctantis colla iuuenti
alternasque manus circum et nodosa ligantem 670
braccia et abducto uitantem cornua uultu.
terror habet populos, cum saeptus imagine torua
ingreditur pugnas, bis Thesea bisque cruentas
caede uidere manus: ueteres reminiscitur actus
ipse tuens sociumque gregem metuendaque quondam 675
limina et absumpto pallentem Cnosida filo.

saeuus at interea ferro post terga reuinctas
Antigonen uiduamque Creon Adrastida leto
admouet; ambae hilares et mortis amore superbae
ensibus intentant iugulos regemque cruentum 680
destituunt, cum dicta ferens Theseia Phegeus
astitit. ille quidem ramis insontis oliuae
pacificus, sed bella ciet bellumque minatur,
grande fremens, nimiumque memor mandantis, et ipsum
iam prope, iam medios operire cohortibus agros 685
ingeminans. stetit ambiguo Thebanus in aestu
curarum, nutantque minae et prior ira tepescit.
tunc firmat sese, fictumque ac triste renidens,
'paruane prostratis,' inquit, 'documenta Mycenis
sanximus? en iterum qui moenia nostra lacescant. 690
accipimus, ueniant; sed ne post bella querantur:
lex eadem uictis.' dicit, sed puluere crasso
caligare diem et Tyrios iuga perdere montes
aspicit; armari populos tamen armaque ferri
ipse iubet pallens, mediaeque in sedibus aulae 695
Eumenidas subitas flentemque Menoecea cernit
turbidus impositosque rogis gaudere Pelasgos.
quis fuit ille dies, tanto cum sanguine Thebis
pax inuenta perit! patriis modo fixa reuellunt
arma deis, clipeisque obducunt pectora fractis, 700

et galeas humiles et adhuc sordentia tabo
spicula: non pharetris quisquam, non ense decorus,
non spectandus equo; cessat fiducia ualli,
murorum patet omne latus, munimina portae
exposcunt: prior hostis habet; fastigia desunt: 705
deiecit Capaneus; exanguis et aegra iuuentus
iam nec coniugibus suprema nec oscula natis
iungit, et attoniti nil optauere parentes.

Atticus at contra, iubar ut clarescere ruptis
nubibus et solem primis aspexit in armis, 710
desilit in campum, qui subter moenia nudos
adseruat manes, dirisque uaporibus aegrum
aera puluerea penitus sub casside ducens
ingemit et iustas belli flammatur in iras.
hunc saltem miseris ductor Thebanus honorem 715
largitur Danaïs, quod non super ipsa iacentum
corpora belligeras acies Martemque secundum
miscuit, aut lacera ne quid de strage nefandus
perderet, eligitur saeuos potura cruores
terra rudis. iamque alternas in proelia gentes 720
dissimilis Bellona ciet; non clamor utrimque,
non utrimque tubae: stat debilis altera pubes
summissos enses nequiquam ammentaque dextris
laxa tenens; cedunt tellure, armisque reductis
ostentant ueteres etiamnum in sanguine plagas. 725
iam nec Cecropiis idem ductoribus ardor,
languescuntque minae et uirtus secura residit:
uentorum uelut ira minor, nisi silua furentes
impedit, insanique tacent sine litore fluctus.
ut uero aequoreus quercum Marathonida Theseus 730
extulit, erectae cuius crudelis in hostes
umbra cadit campumque trucem lux cuspidis implet,
ceu pater Edonios Haemi de uertice Mauors
impulerit currus, rapido mortemque fugamque
axe uehens, sic exanimis in terga reducit 735
pallor Agenoridas; taedet fugientibus uti
Thesea, nec facilem dignatur dextra cruorem.

cetera plebeio desaeuit sanguine uitrus:
sic iuuat exanimis proiectaque praeda canesque
degeneresque lupos, magnos alit ira leones. 740
attamen Olenium Lamyrumque, hunc tela pharetra
promentem, hunc saeui tollentem pondera saxi
deicit, et triplici confisos robore gentis
Alcetidas fratres, totidem quos eminus hastis
continuat; ferrum consumpsit pectore Phyleus, 745
ore momordit Helops, umero transmisit Iapyx.
iamque et quadriugo celsum petit Haemona curru,
horrendumque manu telum rotat: ille pauentes
obliquauit equos; longo perlata tenore
transiit hasta duos, sitiebat uulnera nec non 750
tertia, sed medio cuspis temone retenta est.

sed solum uotis, solum clamore tremendo
omnibus in turmis optat uocitatque Creonta.
atque hunc diuersa bellorum in fronte maniplos
hortantem dictis frustraue extrema minantem 755
conspicit; abscedunt comites: sed Thesea iussi
linquebant fretique deis atque ipsius armis,
ille tenet reuocatque suos; utque aequa notauit
hinc atque hinc odia, extrema se colligit ira,
iam letale furens, atque audax morte futura, 760
‘non cum peltiferis’ ait ‘haec tibi pugna puellis,
uirgineas ne crede manus: hic cruda uirorum
proelia, nos magnum qui Tydea quique furentem
Hippomedonta neci Capaneaue misimus umbris
pectora. quae bellum praeceps amentia suasit, 765
improbe? nonne uides, quos ulciscare, iacentes?’
sic ait, et frustras periturum missile summo
adflavit clipeo. risit uocesque manumque
horridus Aegides, ferrataque arbore magnos
molitur iactus, nec non prius ore superbo 770
intonat: ‘Argolici, quibus haec datur hostia, manes,
pandite Tartareum chaos ultricesque parate
Eumenidas, uenit ecce Creon!’ sic fatus, et auras
dissipat hasta tremens; tunc, qua subtemine duro

multiplicem tenues iterant thoraca catenae, 775
incidit: emicuit per mille foramina sanguis
impius; ille oculis extremo errore solutis
labitur. adsistit Theseus grauis armaque tollens,
'iamne dare extinctis iustos' ait 'hostibus ignes,
iam uictos operire placet? uade atra dature 780
supplicia, extremique tamen secure sepulcri.'

accedunt utrimque pio uexilla tumultu
permiscentque manus; medio iam foedera bello,
iamque hospes Theseus; orant succedere muris
dignarique domos. nec tecta hostilia uictor 785
aspernatus init; gaudent matresque nurusque
Ogygiae, qualis thyrso bellante subactus
mollia laudabat iam marcidus orgia Ganges.
ecce per aduersas Dircae uerticis umbras
femineus quatit astra fragor, matresque Pelasgae 790
decurrunt: quales Bacchea ad bella uocatae
Thyiades amentes, magnum quas poscere credas
aut fecisse nefas; gaudent lamenta nouaeque
exultant lacrimae; rapit huc, rapit impetus illuc,
Thesea magnanimum quaerant prius, anne Creonta, 795
anne suos: uidui ducunt ad corpora luctus.

non ego, centena si quis mea pectora laxet
uoce deus, tot busta simul uulgique ducumque,
tot pariter gemitus dignis conatibus aequem:
turbine quo sese caris instrauerit audax 800
ignibus Euadne fulmenque in pectore magno
quaesierit; quo more iacens super oscula saeui
corporis infelix excuset Tydea coniunx;
ut saeuos narret uigiles Argia sorori;
Arcada quo planctu genetrix Erymanthia clamet, 805
Arcada, consumpto seruante sanguine uultus,
Arcada, quem geminae pariter fleuere cohortes.
uix nouus ista furor ueniensque implesset Apollo,
et mea iam longo meruit ratis aequore portum.

durabisne procul dominoque legere superstes, 810
o mihi bisse nos multum uigilata per annos

Thebai? iam certe praesens tibi Fama benignum
strauit iter coepitque nouam monstrare futuris.
iam te magnanimus dignatur noscere Caesar,
Itala iam studio discit memoratque iuuentus. 815
uiue, precor; nec tu diuinam Aeneida tempta,
sed longe sequere et uestigia semper adora.
mox, tibi si quis adhuc praetendit nubila liuor,
occidet, et meriti post me referentur honores.

THE SILVAE

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Liber Primus

STATIVS STELLAE SVO SALVTEM

Diu multumque dubitavi, Stella iuvenis optime et in studiis nostris eminentissime, qua parte evolviſti, an hos libellos, qui mihi ſubito calore et quadam feſtinandi voluptate fluxerunt, cum ſinguli de ſinu meo pro [. . .] congregatos ipſe dimitterem. quid enim o [. . .] quoque auctoritate editionis onerari, quo adhuc pro Thebaide mea, quamvis me reliquerit, timeo? ſed et Culicem legimus et Batrachomachiam etiam agnoſcimus, nec quiſquam eſt inluſtrium poetarum qui non aliquid operibus ſuis ſtilo remiſſiore praeluſerit. quid quod haec ſerum erat continere, cum illa vos certe quorum honori data ſunt haberetis? ſed apud ceteros neceſſe eſt multum illis pereat ex venia, cum amiſerint quam ſolam habuerunt gratiam celeritatis. nullum enim ex illis biduo longius tractum, quaedam et in ſingulis diebus effuſa. quam timeo ne verum iſtuc verſus quoque ipſi de ſe probent!

Primus libellus ſacroſanctum habet teſtem: ſumendum enim erat ‘a Iove principium.’ centum hos verſus, quos in ecum maximum feci, indulgentiſſimo imperatori poſtero die quam dedicaverat opus, tradere eſt iuſſum. ‘potuiſti illud’ — dicet aliquis — ‘et ante vididiſſe.’ reſpondebis illi tu, Stella cariſſime, qui epithalamium tuum, quod mihi iniunxeras, ſcis biduo ſcriptum. audacter mehercules, ſed tantum tamen hexametros habet et fortasſe tu pro collega mentieris. Manilius certe Vopiſcus, vir erudiſſimus et qui praecipue vindicat a ſitu litteras iam paene fugientes, ſolet ultro quoque nomine meo gloriari villam Tiburtinam ſuam deſcriptam a nobis uno die. ſequitur libellus Rutilio Gallico convaleſcenti dedicatus, de quo nihil dico, ne videar defuncti teſtis occaſione mentiri. nam Claudi Etruſci teſtimonium eſt, qui balneolum a me ſuum intra moram cenae recepit. in fine ſunt kalendae Decembres, quibus utique creditur: noctem enim illam feliciffimam et voluptatibus publicis inexpertam. . . .

I. ECVS MAXIMVS DOMITIANI IMP.

Quae superinposito moles geminata colosso
stat Latium complexa forum? caelone peractum
fluxit opus? Siculis an conformata caminis
effigies lassum Steropem Brontemque reliquit?
an te Palladiae talem, Germanice, nobis 5
effecere manus, qualem modo frena tenentem
Rhenus et attoniti vidit domus ardua Daci?
nunc age Fama prior notum per saecula nomen
Dardanii miretur equi cui vertice sacro
Dindymon et caesis decrevit frondibus Ide: 10
hunc neque discissis cepissent Pergama muris,
nec grege permixto pueri innuptaeque puellae
ipse nec Aeneas nec magnus duceret Hector.
adde quod ille nocens saevosque amplexus Achivos,
hunc mitis commendat eques: iuvat ora tueri 15
mixta notis belli placidamque gerentia pacem.

Nec veris maiora putes: par forma decorque,
par honor. exhaustis Martem non altius armis
Bistonius portat sonipes magnoque superbit
pondere, nec tardo raptus prope flumina cursu 20
fumat et ingenti propellit Strymona flatu.
par operi sedes. hinc obvia limina pandit
qui fessus bellis adsertae munere prolis
primus iter nostris ostendit in aethera divis;
discit et e vultu quantum tu mitior armis, 25
qui nec in externos facilis saevire furores
das Cattis Dacisque fidem: te signa ferente
et minor in leges iret gener et Cato castris.
at laterum passus hinc Iulia tecta tuentur,
illinc belligeri sublimis regia Pauli, 30
terga pater blandoque videt Concordia vultu.
ipse autem puro celsum caput aere saeptus
templa superfulges et prospectare videris,
an nova contemptis surgant Palatia flammis

pulchrius, an tacita vigilet face Troicus ignis 35
atque exploratas iam laudet Vesta ministras.

Dextra vetat pugnas, laevam Tritonia virgo
non gravat et sectae praetendit colla Medusae.
ceu stimulis accendit equum, nec dulcior usquam
lecta deae sedes, nec si, Pater, ipse teneres. 40
pectora, quae mundi valeant evolvere curas
et quis se totis Temese dedit hausta metallis.
it tergo demissa chlamys, latus ense quieto
securum, magnus quanto mucrone minatur
noctibus hibernis et sidera terret Orion. 45

At sonipes habitus animosque imitatus equestris
acrius attollit vultus cursumque minatur;
cui rigidis stant colla iubis vivusque per amos
impetus, et tantis calcaribus ilia late
suffectura patent. vacuae pro cespite terrae 50
aerea captivi crinem tegit ungula Rheni.
hunc et Adrasteus visum extimuisset Arion,
et pavet aspiciens Ledaeus ab aede propinqua
Cyllarus: hic domini numquam mutabit habenas
perpetuus frenis atque uni serviet astro. 55

Vix sola suffieiunt insessaque pondere toto
subter anhelat humus, nec ferro aut aere: laborant
sub genio, teneat quamvis aeterna crepido,
quae superingesti portaret culmina montis
caeliferique attrita genu durasset Atlantis. 60

Nec longae traxere morae. iuvat ipsa labores
forma dei praesens, operique intenta iuventus
miratur plus posse manus. strepit ardua pulsu
machina; continuus septem per culmina ventis
it fragor et magnae figit vaga murmura Romae. 65

Ipse loci custos, cuius sacrata vorago
famosique lacus nomen memorabile servant,
innumeros aeris sonitus et verbere crudo
ut sensit mugire forum, movet horrida sancto
ora situ meritaque caput venerabile quercu. 70
ac primum ingentes habitus lucemque coruscam

expavit maioris equi terque ardua mersit
colla lacu trepidans, laetus mox praeside viso:
‘salve, magnorum proles genitorque deorum,
auditum longe numen mihi! nunc mea felix, 75
nunc veneranda palus, cum te prope nosse tuumque
immortale iubar vicina sede tueri
concessum. semel auctor ego inventorque salutis
Romuleae: tu bella Iovis, tu proelia Rheni,
tu civile nefas, tu tardum in foedera montem 80
longo Marte domas. quod si te nostra tulissent
saecula, temptasses me non audente profundo
ire lacu, set Roma tuas tenuisset habenas.’

Cedat equus Latiae qui contra templa Diones
Caesarei stat sede fori quem traderis ausus 85
Pellaeo, Lysippe, duci; mox Caesaris ora
mirata cervice tulit: vix lumine fesso
explores quam longus in hunc despectus ab illo.
quis rudis usque adeo qui non, ut viderit ambos,
tantum dicat equos quantum distare regentes? 90

Non hoc imbriferas hiemes opus aut Iovis ignem
tergeminum, Aeolii non agmina carceris horret
annorumve moras: stabit, dum terra polusque,
dum Romana dies. hoc et sub nocte silenti,
cum superis terrena placent, tua turba relicto 95
labetur caelo miscebitque oscula iuxta.
ibit in amplexus natus fraterque paterque
et soror: una locum cervix dabit omnibus astris.

Vtere perpetuum populi magnique senatus
munere. Apelleae cuperent te scribere cerae, 100
optassetque novo similem te ponere templo
Atticus Elei senior Iovis, et tua mitis
ora Tarans, tua sidereas imitantia flammās
lumina contempto mallet Rhodos aspera Phoebo.
certus ames terras et quae tibi templa dicamus. 105
ipse colas; nec te caeli iuuet aula, tuosque
laetus huic dono videas dare tura nepotes.

II. EPITHALAMION IN STELLAM ET VIOLENTILLAM

Vnde sacro Latii sonuerunt carmine montes?
cui, Paeon, nova plectra moves umeroque comanti
facundum suspendis ebur? procul ecce canoro
demigrant Helicone deae quatiuntque novena
lampade sollemnem thalamis coeuntibus ignem 5
et de Pieriis vocalem fontibus undam.
quas inter vultu petulans Elegea propinquat
celsior adsueto divasque hortatur et ambit
alternum fultura pedem, decimamque videri
se cupit et medias fallit permixta sorores. 10
ipsa manu nuptam genetrix Aeneia duxit
lumine demissam et dulci probitate rubentem,
ipsa toros et sacra parat coetuque Latino
dissimulata deam crinem vultusque genasque
temperat atque nova gestit minor ire marita. 15

Nosco diem causasque sacri: te concinit iste
(pande fores!) te, Stella, chorus; tibi Phoebus et Euhan
et de Maenalia volucer Tegeaticus umbra
serta ferunt. nec blandus Amor nec Gratia cessat
amplexum niveos optatae coniugis artus 20
floribus innumeris et olenti spargere nimbo.
tu modo fronte rosas, violis modo lilia mixta
excipis et dominae niveis a vultibus obstas.

Ergo dies aderat Parcarum conditus albo
vellere, quo Stellae Violentillaeque professus 25
clamaretur hymen. cedant curaeque metusque,
cessent mendaces obliqui carminis astus,
fama tace: subiit leges et frena momordit
ille solutus amor, consumpta est fabula vulgi
et narrata diu viderunt oscula cives. 30
tu tamen attonitus, quamvis data copia tantae
noctis, adhuc optas permissaque numine dextro
vota paves. pone o dulcis suspiria vates,

pone: tua est. licet expositum per limen aperto
ire redire gradu: iam nusquam ianitor aut lex 35
aut pudor. amplexu tandem satiare petito
(contigit!) et duras pariter reminiscere noctes.
digna quidem merces, et si tibi Iuno labores
Herculeos, Stygiis et si concurrere monstros
fata darent, si Cyaneos raperere per aestus 40
hanc propter: tanti Pisaea lege trementem
currere et Oenomai fremitus audire sequentis.
nec si Dardania pastor temerarius Ida
sedisses, haec dona forent, nec si alma per auras
te potius presum aveheret Tithonia biga. 45

Sed quae causa toros inopinaque gaudia vatis
attulit, hic mecum, dum fervent agmine postes
atriaue et multa pulsantur limina virga,
hic, Erato iucunda, doce. vacat apta movere
colloquia, et docti norunt audire penates. 50

Forte, serenati qua stat plaga lactea caeli,
alma Venus thalamo pulsa modo nocte iacebat
amplexu duro Getici resoluta mariti.
fulcra torosque deae tenerum premit agmen Amorum;
signa petunt quas ferre faces, quae pectora figi 55
imperet; an terris saevire an malit in undis,
an miscere deos an adhuc vexare Tonantem.
ipsi animus nondum nec cordi fixa voluntas:
fessa iacet stratis, ubi quondam conscia culpae
Lemnia deprenso repserunt vincula lecto. 60
hic puer e turba volucrum, cui plurimus ignis
ore manuque levi numquam frustrata sagitta,
agmine de medio tenera sic dulce profatur
voce (pharetrati pressere silentia fratres):
'scis ut, mater,' ait 'nulla mihi dextera segnis 65
militia: quemcumque hominum divumque dedisti,
uritur. at quondam lacrimis et supplice dextra
et votis precibusque virum concede moveri,
o genetrix: duro nec enim ex adamante creati,
sed tua turba sumus. clarus de gente Latina 70

est iuvenis, quem patriciis maioribus ortum
nobilitas gavisa tulit praesagaque formae
protinus e nostro posuit cognomina caelo.
hunc egomet tota quondam (tibi dulce) pharetra
improbis et densa trepidantem cuspidi fixi. 75
quamvis Ausoniis multum gener ille petitus
matribus, edomui victum dominaeque potentis
ferre iugum et longos iussi sperare per annos.
ast illam summa leviter (sic namque iubebas)
lampade parcentes et inertes strinximus arcu. 80
ex illo quantos iuvenis premit anxius ignes,
testis ego attonitus, quantum me nocte dieque
urgentem ferat: haud ulli vehementior umquam
incubui, genetrix, iterataque vulnera fodi.
vidi ego et immiti cupidum decurrere campo 85
Hippomenen, nec sic meta pallescebat in ipsa.
vidi et Abydeni iuvenis certantia remis
brachia laudavique manus et saepe natanti
praeluxi: minor ille calor quo saeva tepebant
aequora: tu veteres, iuvenis, transgressus amores. 90
ipse ego te tantos stupui durasse per aestus
firmavique animos blandisque madentia plumis
lumina detergi. quotiens mihi questus Apollo
sic vatem maerere suum! iam, mater, amatos
indulge thalamos. noster comes ille piusque 95
signifer armiferos poterat memorare labores
claraque facta virum et torrentes sanguine campos;
sic tibi plectra dedit, mitisque incedere vates
maluit et nostra laurum subtexere myrto.
hic iuvenuapsus suaque aut externa revolvit 100
vulnera; pro! quanta est Paphii reverentia, mater,
numinis: hic nostrae deflevit fata columbae.'

Finis erat: tenera matris cervice pependit
blandus et admotis tepefecit pectora pennis.
illa refert vultum non aspernata rogari: 105
'grande quidem rarumque viris, quos ipsa probavi,
Pierius votum iuvenis cupit. hanc ego, formae

egregium mirata decus cui gloria patrum
et generis certabat honos, tellure cadentem
excepi fovique sinu; nec colla genasque 110
comere nec pingui crinem deducere amomo
cessavit mea, nate, manus. mihi dulcis imago
prosiluit. celsae procul aspice frontis honores
suggestumque comae. Latias metire quid ultra
emineat matres: quantum Latonia Nymphas 115
virgo premit quantumque egomet Nereidas exsto.
haec et caeruleis mecum consurgere digna
fluctibus et nostra potuit considerare concha,
et si flammigeras potuisset scandere sedes
hasque intrare domos, ipsi erraretis, Amores. 120
huic quamvis census dederim largita beatos,
vincit opes animo. queritor iam Seras avaros
angustum spoliare nemus Clymeneaque deesse
germina nec virides satis inlacrimare sorores,
vellera Sidonio iam pauca rubescere tabo 125
raraque longaevis nivibus crystalla gelari.
huic Hermum fulvoque Tagum decurrere limo,
nec satis ad cultus; huic Inda monilia Glaucum
Proteaque atque omnem Nereida quaerere iussi.
hanc si Thessalicos vidisses, Phoebe, per agros, 130
erraret secura Daphne. si in litore Naxi
Theseum iuxta foret haec conspecta cubile,
Gnosida desertam profugus liquisset et Euhan.
quod nisi me longis placasset Iuno querelis,
falsus huic pennas et cornua sumeret aethrae 135
rector, in hanc vero cecidisset Iuppiter auro.
sed dabitur iuveni cui tu, mea summa potestas,
nate, cupis, thalami quamvis iuga ferre secundi
saepe neget maerens. ipsam iam cedere sensi
inque vicem tepuisse viro.' sic fata levavit 140
sidereos artus thalamique egressa superbum
limen Amyclaeos ad frena citavit olores.
iungit Amor laetamque vehens per nubila matrem
gemmao temone sedet. iam Thybridis arces

Iliacae: pandit nitidos domus alta penates 145
claraque, gaudentes plauserunt limina cygni.

Digna deae sedes, nitidis nec sordet ab astris.
hic Libycus Phrygiusque silex, hic dura Laconum
saxa virent, hic flexus onyx et concolor alto
vena mari, rupesque nitent quis purpura saepe 150
Oebalis et Tyrii moderator livet aeni.

pendent innumeris fastigia nixa columnis,
robora Dalmatico lucent satiata metallo.
excludunt radios silvis demissa vetustis
frigora, perspicui vivunt in marmore fontes. 155
nec servat natura vices: hic Sirius alget,
bruma tepet, versumque domus sibi temperat annum.

Exsultat visu tectisque potentis alumnae
non secus alma Venus quam si Paphon aequore ab alto
Idaliasque domos Erycinaque templa subiret. 160

tunc ipsam solo reclinem adfata cubili:
'quonam hic usque sopor vacuique modestia lecti,
o mihi Laurentes inter dilecta puellas?

quis morum fideique modus? numquamne virili
summittere iugo? veniet iam tristior aetas. 165

exerce formam et fugientibus utere donis:
non ideo tibi tale decus vultusque superbos
meque dedi viduos ut transmittare per annos,
ceu non cara mihi. satis o nimiumque priores
despexisse procos. at enim hic tibi sanguine toto 170

deditus unam omnes inter miratur amatque,
nec formae nec stirpis egens: nam docta per urbem
carmina qui iuvenes, quae non didicere puellae?

hunc et bisseos (sic indulgentia pergat
praesidis Ausonii!) cernes attollere fasces 175

ante diem; certe iam nunc Cybeleia movit
limina et Euboicae carmen legit ille Sibyllae.

iamque parens Latius, cuius praenoscere mentem
fas mihi, purpureos habitus iuvenique curule
indulgebit ebur, Dacasque (et gloria maior) 180
exuvias laurosque dabit celebrare recentes.

ergo age, iunge toros atque otia deme iuventae.
quas ego non gentes, quae non face corda iugali?
alituum pecudumque mihi durique ferarum
non renuere greges; ipsum in conubia terrae 185
aethera, cum pluviis rarescunt nubila, solvo.
sic rerum series mundique revertitur aetas.
unde novum Troiae decus ardentumque deorum
raptorem, Phrygio si non ego iuncta marito?
Lydius unde meos iterasset Thybris Iulos? 190
quis septemgeminae posuisset moenia Romae
imperii Latiale caput, ni Dardana furto
cepisset Martem, nec me prohibente, sacerdos?'

His mulcet dictis tacitaeque inspirat honorem
conubii. redeunt animo iam dona precesque 195
et lacrimae vigilesque viri prope limina questus,
Asteris et vatis totam cantata per urbem,
Asteris ante dapes, nocte Asteris, Asteris ortu,
quantum non clamatus Hylas. iamque aspera coepit
flectere corda libens et iam sibi dura videri. 200

Macte toris, Latios inter placidissime vates,
quod durum permensus iter coeptique laboris
prendisti portus. nitidae sic transfuga Pisae
amnis in externos longe flammatus amores
flumina demerso trahit intemerata canali, 205
donec Sicanios tandem prolatus anhelos
ore bibat fontes: miratur dulcia Nais
oscula nec credit pelago venisse maritum.

Quis tibi tunc alacri caelestum in munere claro,
Stella, dies? quanto salierunt pectora voto, 210
dulcia cum dominae dexter conubia vultus
adnuit! ire polo nitidosque errare per axes
visus. Amyclaeis minus exsultavit harenis
pastor ad Idaeas Helena veniente carinas;
Thessala nec talem viderunt Pelea Tempe, 215
cum Thetin Haemoniis Chiron accedere terris
erecto prospexit equo. quam longa morantur
sidera! quam segnis votis Aurora mariti!

At procul ut Stellae thalamos sensere parari
Letous vatum pater et Semeleius Euhan, 220
hic movet Ortygia, movet hic rapida agmina Nysa.
huic Lycii montes gelidaeque umbracula Thymbrae
et Parnasus honos: illi Pangaea resultant
Ismaraque et quondam genialis litora Naxi.
tunc caras iniere fores comitique canoro 225
hic chelyn, hic flavam maculoso nebrida tergo,
hic thyrsos, hic plectra ferunt; hic enthea lauro
tempora, Minoa crinem premit ille corona.

Vixdum emissa dies, et iam socialia praesto
omina, iam festa fervet domus utraque pompa. 230
fronde virent postes, eculgent compita flammis,
et pars immensae gaudet celeberrima Romae.
omnis honos, cuncti veniunt ad limina fasces,
omnis plebeio teritur praetexta tumultu;
hinc eques, hinc iuvenum questus, stola mixta laborat. 235
felices utrosque vocant, sed in agmine plures
invidere viro. iamdudum poste reclinis
quaerit Hymen thalamis intactum dicere carmen
quo vatem mulcere queat. dat Iuno verenda
vincula, et insigni geminat Concordia taeda. 240
hic fuit ille dies: noctem canat ipse maritus,
quantum nosse licet. sic victa sopore doloso
Martia fluminea posuit latus Ilia ripa;
non talis niveos strinxit Lavinia vultus
cum Turno spectante rubet; non Claudia talis 245
respexit populos mota iam virgo carina.

Nunc opus, Aonidum comites tripodumque ministri,
diversis certare modis: eat enthea vittis
atque hederis redimita cohors, ut pollet ovanti
quisque lyra. sed praecipui qui nobile gressu 250
extremo fraudatis opus, date carmina festis
digna toris. hunc ipse Coe plaudente Philitas
Callimachusque senex Vmbroque Propertius antro
ambissent laudare diem, nec tristis in ipsis
Naso Tomis divesque foco lucente Tibullus. 255

Me certe non unus amor simplexque canendi
causa trahit: tecum similes iunctaeque Camenae,
Stella, mihi, multumque pares bacchamur ad aras
et sociam doctis haurimus ab amnibus undam.
at te nascentem gremio mea prima recepit 260
Parthenope, dulcisque solo tu gloria nostro
reptasti. nitidum consurgat ad aethera tellus
Eubois et pulchra tumeat Sebethos alumna;
nec sibi sulphureis Lucrinae Naides antris
nec Pompeiani placeant magis otia Sarni. 265

Heia age, praeclaros Latio properate nepotes,
qui leges, qui castra legant, qui carmina ludant.
acceleret partu decimum bona Cynthia mensem,
sed parcat Lucina precor; tuque ipse parenti
parce, puer, ne mollem uterum, ne stantia laedas 270
pectora; cumque tuos tacito natura recessu
formarit vultus, multum de patre decoris,
plus de matre feras. at tu, pulcherrima forma
Italidum, tandem merito possessa marito,
vincla diu quaesita fove: sic damna decoris 275
nulla tibi; longe virides sic flore iuventae
perdurent vultus, tardeque haec forma senescat.

III. VILLA TIBVRTINA MANILII VOPISCI

Cernere facundi Tibur glaciale Vopisci
si quis et inserto geminos Aniene penates,
aut potuit sociae commercia noscere ripae
certantisque sibi dominum defendere villas,
illum nec calido latravit Sirius astro 5
nec gravis aspexit Nemeae frondentis alumnus:
talis hiems tectis, frangunt sic improba solem
frigora, Pisaeumque domus non aestuat annum.

Ipsa manu tenera tecum scripsisse Voluptas

. . .

9a

tunc Venus Idaliis unxit fastigia sucis
permulsitque comis blandumque reliquit honorem
sedibus et volucres vetuit discedere natos.

O longum memoranda dies! quae mente reporto
gaudia, quam lassos per tot miracula visus!
ingenium quam mite solo, quae forma beatis 15
ante manus artemque locis! non largius usquam
indulsit natura sibi. nemora alta citatis
incubuerunt vadis; fallax responsat imago
frondibus, et longas eadem fugit umbra per undas.
ipse Anien (miranda fides) infraque superque 20
saxeus hic tumidam rabiem spumosaque ponit
murmura, ceu placidi veritus turbare Vopisci
Pieriosque dies et habentes carmina somnos.
litus utrumque domi, nec te mitissimus amnis
dividit: alternas servant praetoria ripas, 25
non externa sibi fluviorum obstare queruntur.
Sestiacos nunc Fama sinus pelagusque natatum
iactet et audaci victos delphinas ephebo:
hic aeterna quies, nullis hic iura procellis,
numquam fervor aquis. datur hic transmittere visus 30
et voces et paene manus. sic Chalcida fluctus
expellunt fluvii, sic dissociata profundo
Bruttia Sicanium circumspicit ora Pelorum.

Quid primum mediumve canam, quo fine quiescam?
auratasne trabes an Mauros undique postes 35
an picturata lucentia marmora vena
mirer, an emissas per cuncta cubilia nymphas?
huc oculis, huc mente trahor. venerabile dicam
lucorum senium? te, quae vada fluminis infra
cernis, an ad silvas quae respicis, aula, tacentis, 40
qua tibi tota quies offensaue turbine nullo
nox silet et nigros imitantia murmura somnos?
an quae graminea suscepta crepidine fumant
balnea et impositum ripis argentibus ignem,
quaque vaporiferis iunctus fornacibus amnis 45
ridet anhelantes vicino flumine nymphas?

Vidi artes veterumque manus variisque metalla
viva modis. labor est auri memorare figuras
aut ebur aut dignas digitis contingere gemmas;
quicquid et argento primum vel in aere minori 50
lusit, et enormes manus est experta colossos.
dum vapor aspectu visusque per omnia duco,
calcabam necopinus opes. nam splendor ab alto
defluus et nitidum referentes aera testae
monstravere solum, varias ubi picta per artes 55
gaudet humus superatque novis asarota figuris.
expavere gradus.

Quid nunc iungentia mirer
aut quid partitis distantia tecta trichoris?
quid te, quae mediis servata penetibus arbor
tectata per et postes liquidas emergis in auras, 60
quo non sub domino saevas passura bipennes?
et nunc ignaro forsitan vel lubrica Nais
vel non abruptos tibi demet Hamadryas annos.
quid referam alternas gemino super aggere mensas
albentesque lacus altosque in gurgite fontes? 65
teque, per obliquum penitus quae laberis amnem,
Marcia, et audaci transcurris flumina plumbo?
an solum Ioniis sub fluctibus Elidis amnem
dulcis ad Aetnaeos deducat semita portus?

illic ipse antris Anien et fonte relicto, 70
nocte sub arcana glaucos exutus amictus
huc illuc fragili prosternit pectora musco,
aut ingens in stagna cadit vitreasque natatu
plaudit aquas. illa recubat Tiburnus in umbra,
illic sulphureos cupit Albula mergere crines; 75
haec domus Egeriae nemoralem abiungere Phoeben
et Dryadum viduare choris argentia possit
Taygeta et silvis accersere Pana Lycaeis.
quod ni templa darent alias Tirynthia sortes,
et Praenestinae poterant migrare sorores. 80

Quid bifera Alcinoi laudem pomaria vosque,
qui numquam vacui prodistis in aethera, rami?
cedant Telegoni, cedant Laurentia Turni
iugera Lucrinaeque domus litusque cruenti
Antiphatae; cedant vitreae iuga perfida Circes 85
Dulichiiis ululata lupis, arcesque superbae
Anxyris et sedes Phrygio quas mitis alumno
debet anus; cedant, quae te iam solibus artis
avia nimbose revocabunt litora bruma.

Scilicet hic illi meditantur pondera mores; 90
hic premitur fecunda quies, virtusque serena
fronte gravis sanusque nitor luxuque carentes
deliciae, quas ipse suis digressus Athenis
mallet deserto senior Gargettius horto;
haec per et Aegaeas hiemes Pliadumque nivolum 95
sidus et Oleniis dignum petiisse sub astris,
si Maleae credenda ratis Siculosque per aestus
sit via: cur oculis sordet vicina voluptas?
hic tua Tiburtes Faunos chelys et iuvat ipsum
Alciden dictumque lyra maiore Catillum; 100
seu tibi Pindaricis animus contendere plectris,
sive chelyn tollas heroa ad robora, sive
liventem satiram nigra rubigine turbes,
seu tua non alia splendescat epistola cura.

Digne Midae Croesique bonis et Perside gaza, 105
macte bonis animi, cuius stagnantia rura

debut et flavis Hermus transcurrere ripis
et limo splendente Tagus. sic docta frequentes
otia, sic omni detectus pectora nube
finem Nestoreae precor egrediare senectae.

IV. SOTERIA RVTILII GALLICI

Estis, io, superi, nec inexorabile Clotho
volvitur opus, videt alma pios Astraea Iovique
conciliata redit, dubitataque sidera cernit
Gallicus. es caelo dive, es, Germanice, cordi
(quis neget?): erubuit tanto spoliare ministro 5
imperium Fortuna tuum. stat proxima cervix
ponderis immensi damnosaeque fila senectae
exiit atque alios melior revirescit in annos.
ergo alacres quae signa colunt urbana cohortes,
inque sinum quae saepe tuum fora turbida questum 10
confugiunt leges, urbesque ubicumque togatae
quae tua longinquis implorant iura querelis,
certent laetitia, nosterque ex ordine collis
confremat, et sileant peioris murmura famae.
quippe manet longumque aevo redeunte manebit 15
quem penes intrepidae mitis custodia Romae,
nec tantum induerint fatis nova saecula crimen
aut instaurati peccaverit ara Tarenti.

Ast ego nec Phoebum, quamquam mihi surda sine illo
plectra, nec Aonias decima cum Pallade divas 20
aut mitem Tegeae Dircesve hortabor alumnum;
ipse veni viresque novas animumque ministra,
qui caneris; docto nec enim sine numine tantus
Ausoniae decora ampla togae centumque dedisti
iudicium mentemque viris. licet enthea vatis 25
excludat Piplea sitim nec conscia detur
Pirene: largos potius mihi gurges in haustus
qui rapitur de fonte tuo, seu plana solutis
quom struis orsa modis seu quom tibi dulcis in artem
frangitur et nostras curat facundia leges. 30
quare age, si Cereri sua dona merumque Lyaeo
reddimus, et dives praedae tamen accipit omni
exuvias Diana tholo captivaeque tela
Bellipotens; nec tu (quando tibi, Gallice, maius

eloquium fandique opibus sublimis abundas) 35
sperne coli tenuiore lyra. vaga cingitur astris
luna, et in Oceanum rivi cecidere minores.

Quae tibi sollicitus persolvit praemia morum
urbis amor! quae tum patrumque equitumque notavi
lumina et ignarae plebis lugere potentes! 40
non labente Numa timuit sic curia felix,
Pompeio nec celsus eques nec femina Bruto.
hoc illud: tristis invitum audire catenas;
parcere verberibus nec qua iubet alta potestas
ire, set armatas multum sibi demere vires 45
dignarique manus humilis et verba precantum;
reddere iura foro nec proturbare curules,
et ferrum mulcere toga. sic itur in alta
pectora, sic mixto reverentia fidit amori.

Ipsa etiam cunctos gravis inclementia fati 50
terrui et subiti praeceps iuvenile pericli,
nil cunctante malo. non illud culpa senectae
(quippe ea bis senis vixdum orsa excedere lustris),
sed labor intendens animique in membra vigentis
imperium vigilesque suo pro Caesare curae, 55
dulce opus. hinc fessos penitus subrepsit in artus
insidiosa quies et pigra oblivio vitae.

Tunc deus, Alpini qui iuxta culmina dorsi
signat Apollineos sancto cognomine lucos,
respicit heu tanti pridem securus alumni. 60
praegressusque moras: 'hinc mecum, Epidauria proles,
hinc' ait 'i gaudens: datur (aggredienda facultas!)
ingentem recreare virum. teneamus adorti
(tendatis iam fila!) colos. ne fulminis atrii
sit metus: has ultro laudarit Iuppiter artes. 65
nam neque plebeiam aut dextro sine numine cretam
servo animam. atque adeo breviter, dum tecta subimus,
expediam. genus ipse suis permissaque retro
nobilitas; nec origo latet, sed luce sequente
vincitur et magno gaudet cessisse nepoti. 70
prima togae virtus illi quoque: clarus et ingens

eloquio; mox innumeris exercita castris
occiduas primasque domos et sole sub omni
permeruit iurata manus, nec in otia pacis
permissum laxare animos ferrumque recingi. 75
hunc Galatea vicens ausa est incessere bello
(me quoque!) perque novem timuit Pamphylia messes
Pannoniusque ferox arcuque horrenda fugaci
Armenia et patiens Latii iam pontis Araxes.
quid geminos fascēs magnaeque iterata revolvam 80
iura Asiae? velit illa quidem ter habere quaterque
hunc sibi, sed revocant fasti maiorque curulis
nec permissa semel. Libyci quid mira tributi
obsequia et missum media de pace triumphum
laudem et opes tantas? nec qui mandaverat ausus 85
expectare fuit: gaudet Trasimennus et Alpes
Cannensesque animae; primusque insigne tributum
ipse palam laeta poscebat Regulus umbra.
non vacat Arctoas acies Rhenumque rebellem
captivaeque preces Veledae et, quae maxima nuper 90
gloria, depositam Dacis pereuntibus Urbem
pandere, cum tanti lectus rectoris habenas,
Gallice, Fortuna non admirante subisti.
hunc igitur, si digna loquor, rapiemus iniquo,
nate, Iovi. rogat hoc Latiae pater inclitus urbis, 95
et meruit; neque enim frustra mihi nuper honora
carmina patricio pueri sonuistis in ostro.
si qua salutifero gemini Chironis in antro
herba, tholo quodcumque tibi Troiana recondit
Pergamus aut medicis felix Epidaurus harenis 100
educat, Idaea profert quam Creta sub umbra
dictamni florentis opem, quoque anguis abundat
spumatu: iungam ipse manus atque omne benigne
virus, odoriferis Arabum quod doctus in arvis
aut Amphrysiaco pastor de gramine carpsit.’ 105

Dixerat. inveniunt positos iam segniter artus
pugnantemque animam; ritu se cingit uterque
Paeonio monstrantque simul parentque volentes,

donec letiferas vario medicamine pestes
et suspecta mali ruperunt nubila somni. 110
adiuvat ipse deos morboque valentior omni
occupat auxilium. citius non arte reffectus
Telephus Haemonia, nec quae metuentis Atridae
saeva Machaonio coierunt vulnera suco.

Quis mihi tot coetus inter populique patrumque 115
sit curae votique locus? tamen ardua testor
sidera teque, pater vatum Thymbraee, quis omni
luce mihi, quis nocte timor, dum postibus haerens
assiduus nunc aure vigil nunc lumine cuncta
auguror; immensae veluti conexa carinae 120
cumba minor, cum saevit hiems, pro parte furentis
parva receptat aquas et eodem volvitur austro.

Nectite nunc laetae candentia fila, sorores,
nectite! nemo modum transmissi computet aevi:
hic vitae natalis erit. tu Troica dignus 125
saecula et Euboici transcendere pulveris annos
Nestoreosque situs! qua nunc tibi pauper acerra
digna litem? nec si vacuet Mevania valles,
aut praestent niveos Clitumna novalia tauros,
sufficiam. sed saepe deis hos inter honores 130
caespes et exiguo placuerunt farra salino.

V. BALNEVM CLAVDII ETRVSCI

Non Helicon gravi pulsat chelys enthea plectro,
nec lassata voco totiens mihi numina, Musas;
et te, Phoebe, choris et te dimittimus, Euhan;
tu quoque muta ferae, volucer Tegeae, sonorae
terga premas: alios poscunt mea carmina coetus. 5
Naidas, undarum dominas, regemque corusci
ignis adhuc fessum Siculaque incude rubentem
elicuisse satis. paulum arma nocentia, Thebae,
ponite: dilecto volo lascivire sodali.
iunge, puer, cyathos et ne numerare labora 10
cunctantemque incende chelyn; discede Laborque
Curaque, dum nitidis canimus gemmantia saxis
balnea dumque procax vittis hederisque, soluta
fronde verecunda, Clio mea ludit Etrusco.
ite, deae virides, liquidosque advertite vultus 15
et vitreum teneris crinem redimite corymbis,
veste nihil tectae, quales emergitis altis
fontibus et visu Satyros torquetis amantes.
non vos quae culpa decus infamastis aquarum,
sollicitare iuvat; procul hinc et fonte doloso 20
Salmacis et viduae Cebrenidos arida luctu
flumina et Herculei praedatrix cedat alumni.
vos mihi quae Latium septenaque culmina, Nymphae,
incolitis Thybrimque novis attollitis undis,
quas praeceps Anien atque exceptura natatus 25
Virgo iuvat Marsasque nives et frigora ducens
Marcia, praecelsis quarum vaga molibus unda
crescit et innumero pendens transmittitur arcu:
vestrum opus aggredimur, vestra est quam carmine molli
pando domus. non umquam aliis habitastis in antris 30
ditius. ipsa manus tenuit Cytherea mariti
monstravitque artes; neu vilis flamma caminos
ureret, ipsa faces volucrum succendit amorum.
non huc admissae Thasos aut undosa Carystos;

maeret onyx longe, queriturque exclusus ophites: 35
sola nitet flavis Nomadum decisa metallis
purpura, sola cavo Phrygiae quam Synnados antro
ipse cruentavit maculis lucentibus Attis
quaeque Tyri niveas secat et Sidonia rupes.
vix locus Eurotae, viridis cum regula longo 40
Synnada distinctu variat. non limina cessant,
effulgent camerae, vario fastigia vitro
in species animoque nitent. stupet ipse beatas
circumplexus opes et parcius imperat ignis.
multus ubique dies, radiis ubi culmina totis 45
perforat atque alio sol improbus uritur aestu.
nil ibi plebeium; nusquam Temesaea notabis
aera, sed argento felix propellitur unda
argentoque cadit, labrisque nitentibus instat
delicias mirata suas et abire recusat. 50

Extra autem niveo qui margine caerulus amnis
vivit et in summum fundo patet omnis ab imo
cui non ire lacu pigrosque exsolvere amictus
suadeat? hoc mallet nasci Cytherea profundo,
hic te perspicuum melius, Narcisse, videres, 55
hic velox Hecate velit et deprensa lavari.

Quid nunc strata solo referam tabulata crepantis
auditura pilas, ubi languidus ignis inerrat
aedibus et tenuem volvunt hypocausta vaporem?
nec si Baianis veniat novus hospes ab oris, 60
taliam despiciet (fas sit componere magnis
parva), Neronea nec qui modo lotus in unda,
hic iterum sudare neget. macte, oro, nitenti
ingenio curaque puer! tecum ista senescant,
et tua iam melius discat fortuna renasci!

VI. KALENDAE DECEMBRES

Et Phoebus pater et severa Pallas
et Musae procul ite feriatae:
Iani vos revocabimus kalendis.
Saturnus mihi compede exsoluta
et multo gravidus mero December 5
et ridens Iocus et Sales protervi
adsint, dum refero diem beatum
laeti Caesaris ebriamque ~parcen~.

Vix aurora novos movebat ortus,
iam bellaria linea pluebant: 10
hunc rorem veniens profudit eurus.
quicquid nobile Ponticis nucetis,
fecundis cadit aut iugis Idymes;
quod ramis pia germinat Damascos,
et quod percoquit ~aebosia~ Caunos, 15
largis gratuitum cadit rapinis;
molles gaioli lucuntulique
et massis Amerina non perustis
et mustaceus et latente palma
praegnantes caryotides cadebant. 20
non tantis Hyas inserena nimbis
terras obruit aut soluta Plias,
qualis per cuneos hiems Latinos
plebem grandine contudit serena.
ducat nubila Iuppiter per orbem 25
et latis pluvias minetur agris,
dum nostri Iovis hi ferantur imbres.

Ecce autem caveas subit per omnis
insignis specie decora cultu
plebes altera, non minor sedente. 30
hi panaria candidasque mappas
subvectant epulasque lautiores;
illi marcida vina largiuntur:
Idaeos totidem putes ministros.

Orbem, qua melior severiorque est, 35
et gentes alis insemel togatas;
et cum tot populos, beate, pascas,
hunc Annona diem superba nescit.
i nunc saecula compara, Vetustas,
antiqui Iovis aureumque tempus: 40
non sic libera vina tunc fluebant
nec tardum seges occupabat annum.
una vescitur omnis ordo mensa,
parvi, femina, plebs, eques, senatus:
libertas reverentiam remisit. 45
et tu quin etiam (quis hoc vocari,
quis promittere possit hoc deorum?)
nobiscum socias dapes inisti.
iam se, quisquis is est, inops beatus
convivam ducis esse gloriatur. 50

Hos inter fremitus novosque luxus
spectandi levis effugit voluptas:
stat sexus rudis, insciusque ferri
ut pugnas capit improbus viriles!
credas ad Tanain ferumque Phasim 55
Thermodontiacas calere turmas.
hic audax subit ordo pumilorum,
quos natura brevis statim peracta
nodosum semel in globum ligavit.
edunt vulnera conseruntque dextras 60
et mortem sibi (qua manu!) minantur.
ridet Mars pater et cruenta Virtus,
casuraeque vagis grues rapinis
mirantur pugiles ferociore.

Iam noctis propioribus sub umbris 65
dives sparsio quos agit tumultus!
hic intrant faciles emi puellae,
hic agnoscitur omne quod theatris
aut forma placet aut probatur arte.
hoc plaudunt grege Lydiae tumentes, 70
illic cymbala tinnulaeque Gades,

illic agmina confremunt Syrorum,
hic plebs scenica quique comminutis
permutant vitreis gregale sulphur.

Inter quae subito cadunt volatu 75
immensae volucrum per astra nubes,
quas Nilus sacer horridusque Phasis,
quas udo Numidae legunt sub austro.
desunt qui rapiant, sinusque pleni
gaudent dum nova lucra comparantur. 80
tollunt innumeras ad astra voces
Saturnalia principis sonantes,
et dulci dominum favore clamant:
hoc solum vetuit licere Caesar.

Vixdum caerulea nox subibat orbem, 85
descendit media nitens harena
densas flammeus orbis inter umbras
vincens Gnosiacae facem coronae.
conlucet polus ignibus nihilque
obscurae patitur licere nocti. 90
fugit pigra Quies, inersque Somnus
haec cernens alias abit in urbes.

Quis spectacula, quis iocos licentes,
quis convivia, quis dapes inemptas,
largi flumina quis canat Lyaei? 95
iam iam deficio tuoque Baccho
in serum trahor ebrius soporem.

Quos ibit procul hic dies per annos!
quam nullo sacer exolescet aevo!
dum montes Latii paterque Thybris, 100
dum stabit tua Roma dumque terris
quod reddis Capitolium manebit.

Liber Secundus

STATIVS MELIORI SVO SALVTEM

Et familiaritas nostra qua gaudeo, Melior, vir optime nec minus in iudicio litterarum quam in omni vitae colore tersissime, et ipsa opusculorum quae tibi trado condicio sic posita est ut totus hic ad te liber meus etiam sine epistola spectet. primum enim habet Glauciam nostrum, cuius gratissima infantia, et qualem plerumque infelices sortiuntur — apud te complexus amabam — iam non tibi. huius amissi recens vulnus, ut scis, epicedio prosecutus sum adeo festinanter ut excusandam habuerim affectibus tuis celeritatem. nec nunc eam apud te iacto qui nosti, sed et ceteris indico, ne quis asperiore lima carmen examinet et a confuso scriptum et dolenti datum, cum paene supervacua sint tarda solacia. Polli mei villa Surrentina quae sequitur debuit a me vel in honorem eloquentiae eius diligentius dici, sed amicus ignovit. in arborem certe tuam Melior, et psittacum scis a me leves libellos quasi epigrammatis loco scriptos. eandem exigebat stili facilitatem leo mansuetus, quem in amphitheatro prostratum frigidum erat sacratissimo Imperatori, ni statim traderem. ad Vrsum quoque nostrum, iuvenem candidissimum et sine iactura desidia doctissimum, scriptam de amisso puero consolationem super ea quae ipsi debeo huic libro libenter inserui, quia honorem eius tibi laturus accepto est. cludit volumen genethliacon Lucani, quod Polla Argentaria, rarissima uxorum, cum hunc diem forte consuleremus, imputari sibi voluit. ego non potui maiorem tanti auctoris habere reverentiam quam quod laudes eius dicturus hexametros meos timui. Haec qualiacumque sunt, Melior carissime, si tibi non displicuerint, a te publicum accipiant; si minus, ad me revertantur.

I. GLAVCIAS ATEDII MELIORIS DELICATVS

Quod tibi praerepti, Melior, solamen alumni
improbis ante rogos et adhuc vivente favilla
ordiar? abruptis etiam nunc flebile venis
vulnus hiat, magnaeque patet via lubrica plagae,
cum iam egomet cantus et verba medentia saevus 5
consero, tu planctus lamentaque fortia mavis
odistique chelyn surdaque averteris aure.
intempesta cano: citius me tigris abactis
fetibus orbatique velint audire leones.
nec si tergeminum Sicula de virgine carmen 10
affluat aut silvis chelys intellecta ferisque,
mulceat insanos gemitus. stat pectore demens
luctus et admoto latrant praecordia tactu.

Nemo vetat: satiare malis aegrumque dolorem
libertate doma. iam flendi expleta voluptas, 15
iamque preces fessus non indignaris amicas?
iamne canam? lacrimis en et mea carmine in ipso
ora natant tristesque cadunt in verba liturae.
ipse etenim tecum nigrae sollemnia pompae
spectatumque Vrbi scelus et puerile feretrum 20
produxi; saevos damnati turis acervos
plorantemque animam supra sua funera vidi;
teque patrum gemitus superantem et brachia matrum
complexumque rogos ignemque haurire parantem
vix tenui similis comes offendique tenendo. 25
et nunc heu vittis et frontis honore soluto
infaustus vates versa mea pectora tecum
plango lyra: ~et diu~ comitem sociumque doloris,
si merui luctusque tui consortia sensi,
iam lenis patiare precor: me fulmine in ipso 30
audivere patres; ego iuxta busta profusis
matribus atque piis cecini solatia natis,
et mihi, cum proprios gemerem defectus ad ignes
(quem, Natura!) patrem. nec te lugere severus

arceo, sed confer gemitus pariterque fleamus. 35

Iamdudum dignos aditus laudumque tuarum,
o merito dilecte puer, primordia quaerens
distrahor. hinc anni stantes in limine vitae,
hinc me forma rapit, rapit inde modestia praecox
et pudor et tenero probitas maturior aevo. 40
o ubi purpureo suffusus sanguine candor
sidereique orbes radiataque lumina caelo
et castigatae collecta modestia frontis
ingenuique super crines mollisque decorae
margo comae? blandis ubinam ora arguta querelis 45
osculaque impliciti vernos redolentia flores,
et mixtae risu lacrimae penitusque loquentis
Hyblaeis vox mixta favis? cui sibila serpens
poneret et saevae vellent servire novercae.
nil veris adfingo bonis. heu lactea colla, 50
brachiaque et numquam domini sine pondere cervix!
o ubi venturae spes non longinqua iuventae,
atque genis optatus honos iurataque multum
barba tibi? cuncta in cineres gravis intulit hora
hostilisque dies: nobis meminisse relictum. 55
quis tua colloquiis hilaris mulcebit amatis
pectora, quis curas mentisque arcana remittet?
accensum quis bile fera famulisque tumentem
leniet ardentique in se deflectet ab ira?
inceptas quis ab ore dapes libataque vina 60
auferet et dulci turbabit cuncta rapina?
quis matutinos abrumpet murmure somnos
impositus stratis, abitusque morabitur artis
nexibus, atque ipso revocabit ad oscula poste?
obvius intranti rursus quis in ora manusque 65
prosiliet brevibusque umeros circumdabit ulnis?
muta domus, fateor, desolatique penates,
et situs in thalamis et maesta silentia mensis!

Quid mirum, tanto si te pius altor honorat
funere? tu domino requies portusque senectae, 70
tu modo deliciae, dulces modo pectore curae.

non te barbaricae versabat turbo catastae,
nec mixtus Phariis venalis mercibus infans
compositosque sales meditataque verba locutus
quaesisti lascivus erum tardeque parasti. 75
hic domus, hinc ortus, dominique penatibus olim
carus uterque parens atque in tua gaudia liber,
ne quererere genus. raptum sed protinus alvo
sustulit exsultans ac prima lucida voce
astra salutantem dominus sibi mente dicavit, 80
amplexusque sinu tulit et genuisse putavit.
fas mihi sanctorum venia dixisse parentum,
tuque oro, Natura, sinas, cui prima per orbem
iura animis sancire datum: non omnia sanguis
proximus aut serie generis demissa propago 85
alligat; interius nova saepe adscitaque serpunt
pignora conexas. natos genuisse necesse est,
elegisse iuvat. tenero sic blandus Achilli
semifer Haemonium vincebat Pelea Chiron.
nec senior Peleus natum comitatus in arma 90
Troica, sed claro Phoenix haerebat alumno.
optabat longe reditus Pallantis ovantis
Evander, fidus pugnas spectabat Acoetes.
cumque procul nitidis genitor cessaret ab astris,
fluctivagus volucrem comebat Persea Dictys. 95
quid referam altricum victas pietate parentes?
quid te post cineres deceptaque funera matris
tutius Inoo reptantem pectore, Bacche?
iam secura patris Tuscis regnabat in undis
Ilia, portantem lassabat Romulus Accam. 100
vidi ego transertos alieno in robore ramos
altius ire suis. et te iam fecerat illi
mens animusque patrem, necdum moresve decorve:
tu tamen et vinctas etiam nunc murmure voces
vagitumque rudem fletusque infantis amabas. 105

Ille, velut primos exspiraturus ad austros
mollibus in pratis alte flos improbus exstat,
sic tener ante diem vultu gressuque superbo

vicerat aequales multumque reliquerat annos.
sive catenatis curvatus membra palaestris 110
staret, Amyclaea conceptum matre putares;
Oebaliden illo praeceps mutaret Apollo,
Alcides pensaret Hylan: seu gratus amictu
Attica facundi decurreret orsa Menandri,
laudaret gavis sonum crinemque decorum 115
fregisset rosea lasciva Thalia corona;
Maeonium sive ille senem Troiaequae labores
diceret aut casus tarde remeantis Vlixis,
ipse pater sensus, ipsi stupuere magistri.

Scilicet infausta Lachesis cunabula dextra 120
attigit, et gremio puerum complexa fovebat
Invidia: illa genas et adultum comere crinem,
et monstrare artes et verba infigere, quae nunc
plangimus. Herculeos annis aequare labores
coeperat adsurgens, sed adhuc infantia iuxta; 125
iam tamen et validi gressus mensuraque maior
cultibus et visae puero decrescere vestes,
cum tibi quas vestes, quae non gestamina mitis
festinabat erus? brevibus constringere laenis
pectora et angusta telas artare lacerna; 130
enormes non ille sinus, sed semper ad annos
texta legens modo puniceo velabat amictu,
nunc herbas imitante sinu, nunc dulce rubenti
murice, nunc vivis digitos incendere gemmis
gaudebat; non turba comes, non munera cessant: 135
sola verecundo deerat praetexta decori.

Haec fortuna domus. subitas inimica levavit
Parca manus. quo, diva, feros gravis exseris ungues?
non te forma movet, non te lacrimabilis aetas?
hunc nec saeva viro potuisset carpere Procne, 140
nec fera crudeles Colchis durasset in iras,
editus Aeolia nec si foret iste Creusa;
torvus ab hoc Athamas insanos flecteret arcus;
hunc quamquam Hectoreos cineres Troiamque perosus
turribus e Phrygiis flesset missurus Vlixes. 145

Septima lux, et iam frigentia lumina torpent,
iam complexa manu crinem tenet infera Iuno.
ille tamen Parcis fragiles urgentibus annos
te vultu moriente videt linguaque cadente
murmurat; in te omnes vacui iam pectoris efflat 150
reliquias, solum meminit solumque vocantem
exaudit, tibi que ora movet, tibi verba relinquit,
et prohibet gemitus consolaturque dolentem.
gratum est, Fata, tamen quod non mors lenta iacentis
exedit puerile decus, manesque subivit 155
integer et nullo temeratus corpora damno,
qualis erat.

Quid ego exsequias et prodiga flammis
dona loquor maestoque ardentia funera luxu?
quod tibi purpureo tristis rogos aggere crevit,
quod Cilicum flores, quod munera graminis Indi, 160
quodque Arabes Phariique Palaestinique liquores
arsuram lavere comam? cupit omnia ferre
prodigus et totos Melior succendere census,
desertas exosus opes; sed non capit ignis
invidus, atque artae desunt in munera flammae. 165

Horror habet sensus. qualem te funere summo
atque rogam iuxta, Melior placidissime quondam,
extimui! tune ille hilaris comisque videri?
unde animi saevaeque manus et barbarus horror,
dum modo fusus humi lucem aversaris iniquam, 170
nunc torvus pariter vestes et pectora rumpis
dilectosque premis visus et frigida lambis
oscula? erant illic genitor materque iacentis
maesta, sed attoniti te spectavere parentes.
quid mirum? plebs cuncta nefas et praevia flerunt 175
agmina, Flaminio quae limite Molvius agger
transvehit, immeritus flammis dum tristibus infans
traditur et gemitum formaque aevoque meretur:
talis in Isthmiacos prolatus ab aequo portus
naufragus imposita iacuit sub matre Palaemon; 180
sic et in anguiferae ludentem gramine Lernaie

rescissum squamis avidus bibit anguis Ophelten.

Pone metus letique minas desiste vereri:
illum nec terno latrabit Cerberus ore,
nulla soror flammis, nulla adsurgentibus hydrys 185
terrebit; quin ipse avidae trux navita cumbae
interius steriles ripas et adusta subibit
litora, ne puero dura ascendisse facultas.

Quid mihi gaudenti proles Cyllenia virga
nuntiat? estne aliquid tam saevo in tempore laetum? 190
noverat effigies generosique ardua Blaesi
ora puer, dum saepe domi nova sarta ligantem
te videt et similes tergentem pectore ceras.
hunc ubi Lethaei lustrantem gurgitis oras
Ausonios inter procures seriemque Quirini 195
adgnovit, timide primum vestigia iungit
accessu tacito summosque lacessit amictus,
inde magis sequitur; neque enim magis ille trahentem
spernit et ignota credit de stirpe nepotum.
mox ubi delicias et rari pignus amici 200
sensit et amissi puerum solacia Blaesi,
tollit humo magnaue ligat cervice diuque
ipse manu gaudens vehit et, quae munera mollis
Elysii, steriles ramos mutasque volucres
porgit et optunso pallentes germine flores. 205
nec prohibet meminisse tui, sed pectora blandus
miscet et alternum pueri partitur amorem.

Hic finis rapto. quin tu iam vulnera sedas
et tollis mersum luctu caput? omnia functa
aut moritura vides: obeunt noctesque diesque 210
astraque, nec solidis prodest sua machina terris.
nam populus mortale genus, plebisque caducae
quis fleat interitus? hos bella, hos aequora poscunt;
his amor exitio, furor his et saeva cupido,
ut sileam morbos; hos ora rigentia Brumae, 215
illos implacido letalis Sirius igni,
hos manet imbrifero pallens Autumnus hiatu.
quicquid init ortus, finem timet. ibimus omnes,

ibimus: immensis urnam quatit Aeacus umbris.

Ast hic quem gemimus, felix hominesque deosque 220
et dubios casus et caecae lubrica vitae
effugit, immunis fatis. non ille rogavit,
non timuit meruitve mori: nos anxia plebes,
nos miseri; quibus unde dies suprema, quis aevi
exitus incertum, quibus instet fulmen ab astris, 225
quae nubes fatale sonet. nil flecteris istis?
sed flectere libens. ades huc emissus ab atro
limine, cui soli cuncta impetrare facultas,
Glaucia! (insontes animas nec portitor arcet,
nec durae comes ille ferae) tu pectora mulce, 230
tu prohibe manare genas noctesque beatas
dulcibus alloquiis et vivis vultibus imple
et periisse nega, desolatamque sororem,
qui potes, et miseros perge insinuare parentes.

II. VILLA SVRRENTINA POLLII FELICIS

Est inter notos Sirenum nomine muros
saxaque Tyrrhenae templis onerata Minervae
celsa Dicarchei speculatrix villa profundi,
qua Bromio dilectus ager, collesque per altos
uritur et prelis non invidet uva Falernis. 5
huc me post patrii laetum quinquennia lustris,
cum stadio iam pigra quies canusque sederet
pulvis, ad Ambracias conversa gymnade frondes,
trans gentile fretum placidi facundia Polli
detulit et nitidae iuvenilis gratia Pollae, 10
flectere iam cupidum gressus qua limite noto
Appia longarum teritur regina viarum.

Sed iuvere morae. placido lunata recessu
hinc atque hinc curvas perrumpunt aequora rupes.
dat natura locum montique intervenit unum 15
litus et in terras scopulis pendentibus exit.
gratia prima loci, gemina testudine fumant
balnea, et e terris occurrit dulcis amaro
nympha mari. levis hic Phorci chorus udaeque crines
Cymodoce viridisque cupit Galatea lavari. 20
ante domum tumidae moderator caerulus undae
excubat, innocui custos laris; huius amico
spumant templa salo. felicia rura tuetur
Alcides; gaudet gemino sub numine portus:
hic servat terras, hic saevis fluctibus obstat. 25
mira quies pelagi: ponunt hic lassa furorem
aequora et insani spirant clementius austri;
hic praeceps minus audet hiems, nulloque tumultu
stagna modesta iacent dominique imitantia mores.
inde per obliquas erepit porticus arces, 30
urbis opus, longoque domat saxa aspera dorso.
qua prius obscuro permixti pulvere soles
et feritas inamoena viae, nunc ire voluptas:
qualis, si subeas Ephyres Baccheidos altum

culmen, ab Inoo fert semita tecta Lyaeo. 35

Non, mihi si cunctos Helicon indulgeat amnes
et superet Piplea sitim largeque volantis
ungula sedet equi reseretque arcana pudicos
Phemonoe fontes vel quos meus auspice Phoebro
altius immersa turbavit Pollius urna, 40
innumeras valeam species cultusque locorum
Pieriis aequare modis. vix ordine longo
suffecere oculi, vix, dum per singula ducor,
suffecere gradus. quae rerum turba! locine
ingenium an domini mirer prius? haec domus ortus 45
aspicit et Phoebi tenerum iubar; illa cadentem
detinet exactamque negat dimittere lucem,
cum iam fessa dies et in aequora montis opaci
umbra cadit vitreoque natant praetoria ponto.
haec pelagi clamore fremunt, haec tecta sonoros 50
ignorant fluctus terraeque silentia malunt.
his favit natura locis, hic victa colenti
cessit et ignotos docilis mansuevit in usus.
mons erat hic ubi plana vides; et lustra fuerunt,
quae nunc tecta subis; ubi nunc nemora ardua cernis, 55
hic nec terra fuit: domuit possessor, et illum
formantem rupes expugnantemque secuta
gaudet humus. nunc cerne iugum discentia saxa
intransesque domos iussumque recedere montem.
iam Methymnaei vatis manus et chelys una 60
Thebais et Getici cedat tibi gloria plectri:
et tu saxa moves, et te nemora alta sequuntur.

Quid referam veteres ceraeque aerisque figuras?
si quid Apellei gaudent animasse colores,
si quid adhuc vacua tamen admirabile Pisa 65
Phidiacae rasere manus, quod ab arte Myronis
aut Polycleteo iussum est quod vivere caelo,
aeraque ab Isthmiacis auro potiora favillis,
ora ducum ac vatium sapientumque ora priorum,
quos tibi cura sequi, quos toto pectore sentis 70
expers curarum atque animum virtute quieta

compositus semperque tuus.

Quid mille revolvam
culmina visendique vices? sua cuique voluptas
atque omni proprium thalamo mare, transque iacentem
Nerea diversis servit sua terra fenestris: 75
haec videt Inarimen, illinc Prochyta aspera pariet;
armiger hac magni patet Hectoris, inde malignum
aera respirat pelago circumflua Nesis;
inde vagis omen felix Euploea carinis,
quaeque ferit curvos exerta Megalia fluctus; 80
angitur et domino contra recubante proculque
Surrentina tuus spectat praetoria Limon.
una tamen cunctis procul eminet una diaetis,
quae tibi Parthenopen directo limite ponti
ingerit: hic Graia penitus delecta metallis 85
saxa; quot Eoae respergit vena Syenes,
Synnade quot maesta Phrygiae fodere secures
per Cybeles lugentis agros, ubi marmore picto
candida purpureo distinguitur area gyro;
hic et Amyclaei caesum de monte Lycurgi 90
quod viret et molles imitatur rupibus herbas;
hic Nomadum lucent flaventia saxa Thasosque
et Chios et gaudens fluctus spectare Carystos:
omnia Chalcidicas turres obversa salutant.
macte animo quod Graia probas, quod Graia frequentas 95
arva, nec invideant quae te genuere Dicarchi
moenia: nos docto melius potiemur alumno.

Quid nunc ruris opes pontoque novalia dicam
iniecta et madidas Baccheo nectare rupes?
saepe per autumnum iam pubescente Lyaeo 100
conscendit scopulos noctisque occulta sub umbra
palmite maturo rorantia lumina tersit
Nereis et dulces rapuit de collibus uvas.
saepe et vicino sparsa est vindemia fluctu,
et Satyri cecidere vadis, nudamque per undas 105
Dorida montani cupierunt prendere Panes.

Sis felix, tellus, dominis ambobus in annos

Mygdonii Pyliique senis nec nobile mutes
servitium, nec te cultu Tirynthia vincat
aula Dicarcheique sinus, nec saepius isti 110
blanda Therapnaei placent vineta Galesi.
hic ubi Pierias exercet Pollius artes,
seu volvit monitus quos dat Gargettius auctor,
seu nostram quatit ille chelyn, seu dissona nectit
carmina, sive minax ultorem stringit iambon: 115
hinc levis e scopulis meliora ad carmina Siren
advolat, hinc motis audit Tritonia cristis.
tunc rapidi ponunt flatus, maria ipsa vetantur
obstrepere, emergunt pelago doctamque trahuntur
ad chelyn et blandi scopulis delphines aderrant. 120

Vive, Midae gazis et Lydo ditior auro,
Troica et Euphratae supra diademata felix,
quem non ambigui fascēs, non mobile vulgus,
non leges, non castra terent; qui pectore magno
spemque metumque domas voto sublimior omni, 125
exemptus fatis indignantemque refellens
Fortunam; dubio quem non in turbine rerum
deprendet suprema dies, sed abire paratum
ac plenum vita. nos, vilis turba, caducis
deservire bonis semperque optare parati, 130
spargimur in casus: celsa tu mentis ab arce
despicis errantes humanaque gaudia rides.
tempus erat cum te geminae suffragia terrae
diriperent, celsusque duas veherere per urbes,
inde Dicarcheis multum venerande colonis 135
hinc adscite meis, pariterque his largus et illis
ac iuvenile calens plectrique errore superbus.
at nunc discussa rerum caligine verum
aspicis. illo alii rursus iactantur in alto,
et tua securos portus placidamque quietem 140
intravit non quassa ratis. sic perge, nec umquam
emeritam in nostras puppem demitte procellas.
tuque, nurus inter longae . . . 147

. . . praecordia curae,

non frontem vertere minae, sed candida semper
gaudia et in vultu curarum ignara voluptas; 150
non tibi sepositas infelix strangulat area
divitias avidique animum dispendia torquent
fenoris: expositi census et docta fruendi
temperies. non ulla deo meliore cohaerent
pectora, non alias docuit concordia mentes. 155
discite securi, quorum de pectore mixtae 143
in longum coiere faces sanctusque pudicae
servat amicitiae leges amor. ite per annos
saeculaque et priscae titulos praecedite famae.

III. ARBOR ATEDII MELIORIS

Stat, quae perspicuas nitidi Melioris opacet
arbor aquas complexa lacus; quae robore ab imo
incurvata vadis redit inde cacumine recto
ardua, ceu mediis iterum nascatur ab undis
atque habitet vitreum tacitis radicibus amnem. 5
quid Phoebum tam parva rogem? vos dicite causas,
Naides, et faciles, satis est, date carmina Fauni.

Nympharum tenerae fugiebant Pana catervae;
ille quidem it, cunctas tamquam velit, et tamen unam
in Pholoen. silvis haec fluminibusque sequentis 10
nunc hirtos gressus, nunc improba cornua vitat.
iamque et belligerum Iani nemus atraque Caci
rura Quirinalesque fuga suspensa per agros
Caelica tesca subit; ibi demum victa labore,
fessa metu, qua nunc placidi Melioris aperti 15
stant sine fraude lares, flavos collegit amictus
artius et niveae posuit se margine ripae.
insequitur velox pecorum deus et sua credit
conubia; ardenti iamiam suspiria librat
pectore, iam praedae levis imminet. ecce citatos 20
advertit Diana gradus, dum per iuga septem
errat Aventinaeque legit vestigia cervae.
paenituit vidisse deam, conversaque fidas
ad comites: 'numquamne avidis arcebo rapinis
hoc petulans foedumque pecus, semperque pudici 25
decrescet mihi turba chori?' sic deinde locuta
depromit pharetra telum breve, quod neque flexis
cornibus aut solito torquet stridore, sed una
emisit contenta manu laevamque soporae
Naidos aversa fertur tetigisse sagitta. 30
illa diem pariter surgens hostemque protervum
vidit et in fontem, niveos ne panderet artus,
sic tota cum veste ruit, stagnisque sub altis
Pana sequi credens ima latus implicat alga.

quid faceret subito deceptus praedo? nec altis 35
credere corpus aquis hirtae sibi conscius audet
pellis, et a tenero nandi rudis. omnia questus
immitem Bromium, stagna invida et invida tela,
primaevam visu platanum, cui longa propago
innumeraeque manus et iturus in aethera vertex, 40
deposuit iuxta vivamque adgressit harenam
optatisque aspergit aquis et talia mandat:
‘vive diu nostri pignus memorabile voti,
arbor, et haec durae latebrosa cubilia nymphae
tu saltem declinis ama, preme frondibus undam. 45
illa quidem meruit, sed ne, precor, igne superno
aestuet aut dura feriaturs grandine; tantum
spargere tu laticem et foliis turbare memento.
tunc ego teque diu recolam dominamque benignae
sedis et inlaesa tutabor utramque senecta, 50
ut Iovis, ut Phoebi frondes, ut discolor umbra
populus et nostrae stupeant tua germina pinus.’
sic ait. illa dei veteres animata calores
uberibus stagnis obliquo pendula trunco
incubat atque umbris scrutatur amantibus undas. 55
sperat et amplexus, sed aquarum spiritus arcet
nec patitur tactus. tandem eluctata sub auras
libratur fundo rursusque enode cacumen
ingeniosa levat, veluti descendat in imos
stirpe lacus alia. iam nec Phoebeia Nais 60
odit et exclusos invitat gurgite ramos.

Haec tibi parva quidem genitali luce paramus
dona, sed ingenti forsitan victura sub aevo.
tu cuius placido posuere in pectore sedem
blandus honos hilarisque tamen cum pondere virtus, 65
cui nec pigra quies nec iniqua potentia nec spes
improba, sed medius per honesta et dulcia limes,
incorrupte fidem nullosque experte tumultus
et secrete, palam quod digeris ordine vitam,
idem auri facilis contemptor et optimus idem 70
comere divitias opibusque immittere lucem;

hac longum florens animi morumque iuventa
Iliacos aequare senes, et vincere persta
quos pater Elysio, genetrix quos detulit annos:
hoc illi duras exoravere sorores, 75
hoc, quae te sub teste situm fugitura tacentem
ardua magnamimi revirescet gloria Blaesi.

IV. PSITTACVS EIVSDEM

Psittace dux volucrum, domini facunda voluptas,
humanae sollers imitator, psittace, linguae,
quis tua tam subito praecluserit murmura fato?
hesternas, miserande, dapes moriturus inisti
nobiscum, et gratae carpentem munera mensae 5
errantemque toris mediae plus tempore noctis
vidimus. adfatus etiam meditataque verba
reddideras. at nunc aeterna silentia Lethes
ille canorus habes. cedat Phaethontia vulgi
fabula: non soli celebrant sua funera cygni. 10

At tibi quanta domus rutila testudine fulgens,
conexusque ebori virgarum argenteus ordo,
argutumque tuo stridentia limina cornu
et querulae iam sponte fores! vacat ille beatus
carcer, et augusti nusquam convicia tecti. 15

Huc doctae stipentur aves quis nobile fandi
ius natura dedit: plangat Phoebus ales,
auditasque memor penitus demittere voces
sturnus, et Aonio versae certamine picae,
quique refert iungens iterata vocabula perdix, 20
et quae Bistonio queritur soror orba cubili:
ferre simul gemitus cognataque ducite flammis
funera, et hoc cunctae miserandum addiscite carmen:
'occidit aerae celeberrima gloria gentis
psittacus, ille plagae viridis regnator Eoae; 25
quem non gemmata volucris Iunonia cauda
vinceret aspectu, gelidi non Phasidis ales,
nec quas umentis Numidae rapuere sub austro;
ille salutator regum nomenque locutus
Caesareum et queruli quondam vice functus amici, 30
nunc conviva levis monstrataque reddere verba
tam facilis, quo tu, Melior dilecte, recluso
numquam solus eras. at non inglorius umbris
mittitur: Assyrio cineres adolentur amomo

et tenues Arabum respirant gramine plumae 35
Sicaniisque crocis; senio nec fessus inerti
scandet odoratos phoenix felicior ignes.'

V. LEO MANSVETVS

Quid tibi monstrata mansuescere profuit ira?
quid scelus humanasque animo dediscere caedes
imperiumque pati et domino parere minori?
quid, quod abire domo rursusque in claustra reverti
suetus et a capta iam sponte recedere praeda 5
insertasque manus laxo dimittere morsu?
occidis, altorum vastator docte ferarum,
non grege Massylo curvaque indagine clausus,
non formidato supra venabula saltu
incitus aut caeco foveae deceptus hiatu, 10
sed victus fugiente fera. stat cardine aperto
infelix cavea, et clausas circum undique portas
hoc licuisse nefas placidi tumuere leones.
tum cunctis cecidere iubae, puduitque relatum
aspicere, et totas duxere in lumina frontes. 15
at non te primo fusum novus obruit ictu
ille pudor: mansere animi, virtusque cadenti
a media iam morte redit, nec protinus omnes
terga dedere minae. sicut sibi conscius alti
vulneris adversum moriens it miles in hostem 20
attollitque manum et ferro labente minatur,
sic piger ille gradu solitoque exutus honore
firmat hians oculos animamque hostemque requirit.
magna tamen subiti tecum solacia leti,
victa, feres, quod te maestis populusque patresque, 25
ceu notus caderes tristi gladiator harena,
ingemuere mori; magni quod Caesaris ora
inter tot Scythicas Libycasque, e litore Rheni
et Pharia de gente feras, quas perdere vile est,
unius amissi tetigit iactura leonis.

VI. CONSOLATIO AD FLAVIVM VRSVM DE AMISSIONE PVERI DELICATI

Saeve nimis, lacrimis quisquis discrimina ponis
lugendique modos. miserum est primaeva parenti
pignera surgentesque (nefas!) accendere natos;
durum et deserti praerepta coniuge partem
conclamare tori, maesta et lamenta sororum 5
et fratrum gemitus; alte haec tamen at procul intrat
altius in sensus, maioraque vulnera vincit
plaga minor. famulum (quia rerum nomina caeca
sic miscet Fortuna manu nec pectora novit),
sed famulum gemis, Vrse, pium, sed amore fideque 10
has meritum lacrimas, cui maior stemmate iuncto
libertas ex mente fuit. ne comprime fletus,
ne pudeat; rumpat frenos dolor iste diesque,
si tam dura placent, hominem gemis (heu mihi! subdo
ipse faces), hominem, Vrse, tuum, cui dulce volenti 15
servitium, cui triste nihil, qui sponte sibique
imperiosus erat. quisnam haec in funera missos
castiget luctus? gemit inter bella peremptum
Parthus equum, fidosque canes flevere Molossi,
et volucres habuere rogam cervusque Maronem. 20
quid, si nec famulus? vidi ipse habitusque notavi
te tantum cupientis erum, sed maior in ore
spiritus et tenero manifesti in sanguine mores.
optarent multum Graiae cuperentque Latinae
sic peperisse nurus. non talem Cressa superbum 25
callida sollicito revocavit Thesea filo,
nec Paris Oebalios talis visurus amores
rusticus invitas deiecit in aequora pinus.
non fallo aut cantus assueta licentia ducit:
vidi et adhuc video, qualem nec bella caventem 30
litore virgineo Thetis occultavit Achillen,
nec circum saevi fugientem moenia Phoebi
Troilon Haemoniae deprendit lancea dextrae.

qualis eras! procul en cunctis puerisque virisque
pulchrior et tantum domino minor! illius unus 35
ante decor, quantum praecedit clara minores
luna faces quantumque alios premit Hesperos ignes.
non tibi femineum vultu decus oraue supra
mollis honos, qualis dubiae post crimina formae
de sexu transire iubent: torva atque virilis 40
gratia; nec petulans acies, blandique severo
igne oculi, qualis bellis iam casside, visu
Parthenopaeus erat; simplexque horrore decoro
crinis, et obsessae nondum primoque micantes
flore genae: talem Ledaean gurgite pubem 45
educat Eurotas, teneri sic integer aevi
Elin adit primosque Iovi puer approbat annos.
nam pudor unde notae, mentis tranquillaque morum
temperies teneroque animus maturior aevo
carmine quo pandisse queam? saepe ille volentem 50
castigabat erum studioque altisque iuvabat
consiliis; tecum tristisque hilarisque nec umquam
ille suus, vultumque tuo sumebat ab ore:
dignus et Haemonium Pyladen praecedere fama
Cecropiamque fidem. sed laudum terminus esto, 55
quem fortuna sinit: non mente fidelior aegra
speravit tardi reditus Eumaeus Vlixis.

Quis deus aut quisnam tam tristia vulnera casus
eligit? unde manus Fatis tam certa nocendi?
o quam divitiis censuque exutus opimo 60
fortior, Vrse, fores! si vel fumante ruina
ructassent dites Vesuvina incendia Locroe,
seu Pollentinos mersissent flumina saltus,
seu Lucanus Acir seu Thybridis impetus altas
in dextrum torsisset aquas, paterere serena 65
fronte deos; sive alma fidem messisque negasset
Cretaue Cyreneque et qua tibi cumque beato
larga redit Fortuna sinu. sed gnara dolorum
Invidia infelix animi vitalia vidit
laedendique vias. 70

Vitae modo carcer adultae:

nectere temptabat iuvenum pulcherrimus ille
cum tribus Eleis unam trieterida lustris.
attendit torvo tristis Rhamnusia vultu,
ac primum implevitque toros oculisque nitorem
addidit ac solito sublimius ora levavit, 75
heu! misero letale favens: seseque videndo
torsit et invidia, mortemque amplexa iacenti
iniecit nexus carpsitque immitis adunca
ora verenda manu. quinta vix Phosphoros ora
rorantem sternebat equum: iam litora duri 80
saeva, Philete, senis durumque Acheronta videbas,
quo domini clamate sono! non saevius atros
nigrasset planctu genetrix sibi saeva lacertos,
nec pater; et certe qui vidit funera frater
erubuit vinci. sed nec servilis adempto 85
ignis: odoriferos exhausit flamma Sabaeos
et Cilicum messes Phariaeque exempta volucris
cinnama et Assyrio manantes gramine sucos,
et domini fletus: hos tantum hausere favillae,
hos bibit usque rogos; nec quod tibi Setia canos 90
restinxit cineres, gremio nec lubricus ossa
quod vallavit onyx, miseris acceptius umbris
quam gemitus.

Sed et ipse iuvat: quid terga dolori,
Vrse, damus? quid damna foves et pectore iniquo
vulnus amas? ubi nota reis facundia raptis? 95
quid caram crucias tam saevis luctibus umbram?
eximius licet ille animi meritusque doleri:
solvisti. subit ille pios carpitque quietem
Elysiam clarosque illic fortasse parentes
invenit; aut illi per amoena silentia Lethes 100
forsan Avernales adludunt undique mixtae
Naides, obliquoque notat Proserpina vultu.

Pone, precor, questus; alium tibi Fata Phileton,
forsan et ipse dabit, moresque habitusque decoros
monstrabit gaudens similemque docebit amari.

VII. GENETHLIACON LVCANI AD POLLAM

Lucani proprium diem frequentet
quisquis collibus Isthmiae Diones
docto pectora concitatus oestro
pendentis bibit ungulae liquorem.
ipsi quos penes est honor canendi, 5
vocalis citharae repertor Arcas,
et tu Bassaridum rotator Euhan,
et Paeon et Hyantiae sorores
laetae purpureas novate vittas,
crinem comite, candidamque vestem 10
perfundant hederae recentiores.
docti largius evagentur amnes,
et plus Aoniae virete silvae,
et, si qua patet aut diem recepit,
sertis mollibus expleatur umbra. 15
centum Thespiacis odora lucis
stent altaria victimaeque centum,
quas Dirce lavat aut alit Cithaeron.
Lucanum canimus, favete linguis;
vestra est ista dies, favete, Musae, 20
dum qui vos geminas tulit per artes,
et vinctae pede vocis et solutae,
Romani colitur chori sacerdos.

Felix heu nimis et beata tellus,
quae pronos Hyperionis meatus 25
summis Oceani vides in undis
stridoremque rotae cadentis audis;
quae Tritonide fertilis Athenas
unctis, Baetica, provocas trapetis:
Lucanum potes imputare terris! 30
hoc plus quam Senecam dedisse mundo
aut dulcem generasse Gallionem.
attollat refluos in astra fontes
Graio nobilior Melete Baetis;

Baetim, Mantua, provocare noli. 35

Natum protinus atque humum per ipsam
primo murmure dulce vagientem
blando Calliope sinu recepit.

tum primum posito remissa luctu
longos Orpheos exuit dolores 40

et dixit: 'puer o dicite Musis,
longaevos cito transiture vates,
non tu flumina nec greges ferarum
nec plectro Geticas movebis ornos,
sed septem iuga Mariumque Thybrim 45

et doctos equites et eloquente
cantu purpureum trahes senatum.
nocturnas alii Phrygum ruinas
et tardi reducis vias Vlixis
et puppem temerariam Minervae 50

trita vatibus orbita sequantur:
tu carus Latio memorque gentis
carmen fortior exeris togatum.
ac primum teneris adhuc in annis
ludes Hectora Thessalosque currus 55

et supplex Priami potentis aurum,
et sedes reserabis inferorum;
ingratus Nero dulcibus theatri
et noster tibi proferetur Orpheus.
dices culminibus Remi vagantis 60

infandos domini nocentis ignes.
hinc castae titulum decusque Pollae
iucunda dabis adlocutione.

mox coepta generosior iuventa
albos ossibus Italis Philippos 65
et Pharsalica bella detonabis,
quo fulmen ducis inter arma divi,
libertate gravem pia Catonem
et gratum popularitate Magnum.

tu Pelusiaci scelus Canopi 70
deflebis pius et Pharo cruenta

Pompeio dabis altius sepulcrum.
haec primo iuvenis canes sub aevo,
ante annos Culicis Maroniani.
cedet Musa rudis ferocis Enni 75
et docti furor arduus Lucreti,
et qui per freta duxit Argonautas,
et qui corpora prima transfigurat.
quid? maius loquar: ipsa te Latinis
Aeneis venerabitur canentem. 80

Nec solum dabo carminum nitorem,
sed taedis genialibus dicabo
doctam atque ingenio tuo decoram
qualem blanda Venus daretque Iuno
forma, simplicitate, comitate, 85
censu, sanguine, gratia, decore,
et vestros hymenaeon ante postes
festis cantibus ipsa personabo.

O saevae nimium gravesque Parcae!
o numquam data longa fata summis! 90
cur plus, ardua, casibus patetis?
cur saeva vice magna non senescunt?
sic gnatum Nasamonii Tonantis
post ortus obitusque fulminatos
angusto Babylon premit sepulcro; 95
sic fixum Paridis manu trementis
Peliden Thetis horruit cadentem;
sic ripis ego murmurantis Hebri
non mutum caput Orpheos sequebar.
sic et tu (rabidi nefas tyranni!) 100
iussus praecipitem subire Lethen,
dum pugnas canis ardua voce
das solacia grandibus sepulcris,
(o dirum scelus! o scelus!) tacebis.'

Sic fata est leviterque decedentes 105
abrasit lacrimas nitente plectro.

At tu, seu rapidum poli per axem
famae curribus arduis levatus

qua surgunt animae potentiores,
terras despicias et sepulcra rides; 110
seu pacis merito nemus reclusi
felix Elysii tenes in oris,
quo Pharsalica turba congregatur,
et te nobile carmen insonantem
Pompei comitantur et Catones; 115
(tu magna sacer et superbus umbra
nescis Tartaron et procul nocentum
audis verbera pallidumque visa
matris lampade respicis Neronem),
adsis lucidus, et vocante Polla 120
unum, quaeso, diem deos silentum
exores: solet hoc patere limen
ad nuptas redeuntibus maritis.
haec te non thiasis procax dolosis
falsi numinis induit figura, 125
ipsum sed colit et frequentat ipsum
imis altius insitum medullis;
at solacia vana subministrat
vultus, qui simili notatus auro
stratis praenitet incubatque somno 130
securae. procul hinc abite, Mortes:
haec vitae genialis est origo.
cedat luctus atrox genisque manent
iam dulces lacrimae, dolorque festus,
quicquid fleverat ante, nunc adoret.

Liber Tertius

STATIVS POLLIO SVO SALVTEM

Tibi certe, Polli dulcissime et hac cui tam fideliter inhaeres quiete dignissime, non habeo diu probandam libellorum istorum temeritatem, cum scias multos ex illis in sinu tuo subito natos et hanc audaciam stili nostri frequenter expaveris, quotiens in illius facundiae tuae penetrali seductus altius litteras intro et in omnis a te studiorum sinus ducor. securus itaque tertius hic Silvarum nostrarum liber ad te mittitur. habuerat quidem et secundus te testem, sed hic habet auctorem. nam primum limen eius Hercules Surrentinus aperit, quem in litore tuo consecratum, statim ut videram, his versibus adoravi. sequitur libellus quo splendidissimum et mihi iucundissimum iuvenem Maecium Celerem, a sacratissimo imperatore missum ad legionem Syriacam, quia sequi non poteram, sic prosecutus sum. merebatur et Claudii Etrusci mei pietas aliquod ex studiis nostris solacium, cum lugeret veris (quod iam rarissimum est) lacrimis senem patrem. Earinus praeterea, Germanici nostri libertus scis quamdiu desiderium eius moratus sim, cum petisset ut capillos suos quos cum gemmata pyxide et speculo ad Pergamenum Asclepium mittebat, versibus dedicarem. summa est ecloga qua mecum secedere Neapolim Claudiam meam exhortor. hic, si verum dicimus, sermo est, et quidem securus ut cum uxore et qui persuadere malit quam placere. huic praecipue libello favebis cum scias hanc destinationem quietis meae tibi maxime intendere meque non tam in patriam quam ad te secedere. vale.

I. HERCVLES SVRRENTINVS POLLII FELICIS

Intermissa tibi renovat, Tirynthie, sacra
Pollius et causas designat desidis anni,
quod coleris maiore tholo nec litora pauper
nuda tenes tectumque vagis habitabile nautis,
sed nitidos postes Graisque effulta metallis, 5
culmina, ceu taedis iterum lustratus honesti
ignis ab Oetaea conscenderis aethera flamma.

Vix oculis animoque fides. tune ille reclusi
liminis et parvae custos inglorius arae?
unde haec aula recens fulgorque inopinus agresti, 10
Alcidae? sunt fata deum, sunt fata locorum.
o velox pietas! steriles hic nuper harenas
ad sparsum pelago montis latus hirtaque dumis
saxa nec ulla pati faciles vestigia terras
cernere erat. quaenam subito fortuna rigentes, 15
ditavit scopulos? Tyrione haec moenia plectro
an Getica venere lyra? stupet ipse labores
annus, et angusti bis seno limite menses
longaevum mirantur opus. deus attulit arces
erexitque suas, atque obluctantia saxa, 20
summovit nitens et magno pectore montem
reppulit: immitem credas iussisse novercam.

Ergo age, seu patrios liber iam legibus Argos
incolis et mersum tumulis Eurysthea calcas,
sive tui solium Iovis et virtute parata, 25
astra tenes, haustumque tibi succincta beati
nectaris excluso melior Phryge porrigit Hebe:
huc ades et genium templis nascentibus infer.
non te Lerna nocens nec pauperis arva Molorchii
nec formidatus Nemees ager antraque poscunt, 30
Thracia nec Pharii polluta altaria regis,
sed felix simplexque domus fraudumque malarum
inscia et hospitibus superis dignissima sedes.
pone truces arcus agmenque immite pharetrae

et regum multo perfusum sanguine robur, 35
instratumque umeris dimitte gerentibus hostem.
hic tibi Sidonio celsum pulvinar acantho
textitur et signis crescit torus asper eburnis.
pacatus mitisque veni nec turbidus ira
nec famulare timens, sed quem te Maenalis Auge, 40
confectum thiasis et multo fratre madentem
detinuit, qualemque vagae post crimina noctis
Thespius obstupuit, totiens socer. hic tibi festa
gymnas, et insontes iuvenum sine caestibus irae
annua veloci peragunt certamina lustro., 45
hic templis inscriptus avo gaudente sacerdos
parvus adhuc similisque tui cum prima novercae
monstra manu premeres atque exanimata doleres.

Sed quae nam subiti, veneranda, exordia templi
dic age, Calliope; socius tibi grande sonabit, 50
Alcides tensoque modos imitabitur arcu.

Tempus erat caeli cum torrentissimus axis
incumbit terris ictusque Hyperione multo
acer anhelantis incendit Sirius agros.
iamque dies aderat profugis cum regibus aptum, 55
fumat Aricinum Triviae nemus et face multa
consciis Hippolyti splendet lacus; ipsa coronat
emeritos Diana canes et spicula terget
et tutas sinit ire feras, omnisque pudicis
Italia terra focus Hecateidas excolit idus. , 60
ast ego, Dardaniae quamvis sub collibus Albae
rus proprium magnique ducis mihi munere currens
unda domi curas mulcere aestusque levare
sufficerent, notas Sirenum nomine rupes
facundique larem Polli non hospes habebam, 65
assidue moresque viri pacemque novosque
Pieridum flores intactaque carmina discens.
forte diem Triviae dum litore ducimus udo
angustasque fores adsuetaque tecta gravati
frondibus et patula defendimus arbore soles, 70
delituit caelum et subitis lux candida cessit

nubibus ac tenuis graviore favonius austro
immaduit; qualem Libyae Saturnia nimbum
attulit, Iliaco dum dives Elissa marito
donatur testesque ululant per devia nymphae., 75
diffugimus, festasque dapes redimitaque vina
abripiunt famuli; nec quo convivia migrent,
quamvis innumerae gaudentia rura superne
insedere domus et multo culmine dives
mons nitet: instantes sed proxima quaerere nimbi, 80
suadebant laesique fides reditura sereni.
stabat dicta sacri tenuis casa nomine templi
et magnum Alciden humili lare parva premebat,
fluctivagos nautas scrutatoresque profundi
vix operire capax. huc omnis turba coimus, 85
huc epulae ditesque tori coetusque ministrum
stipantur nitidaeque cohors gratissima Pollae.
non cepere fores, angustaque deficit aedes.
erubuit risitque deus dilectaque Polli
corda subit blandisque virum complectitur ulnis., 90
'tune,' inquit 'largitor opum, qui mente profusa
tecta Dicarchei pariter iuvenemque replesti
Parthenopen? nostro qui tot fastigia monti,
tot virides lucos, tot saxa imitantia vultus
aeraque, tot scripto viventes lumine ceras , 95
fixisti? quid enim ista domus, quid terra, priusquam
te gauderet, erant? longo tu tramite nudos
texisti scopulos, fueratque ubi semita tantum,
nunc tibi distinctis stat porticus alta columnis,
ne sorderet iter. curvi tu litoris ora, 100
clausisti calidas gemina testudine nymphas.
vix opera enumerem; mihi pauper et indigus uni
Pollius? et talis hilaris tamen intro penates
et litus quod pandis, amo. sed proxima sedem
despicit et tacite ridet mea limina Iuno., 105
da templum dignasque tuis conatibus aras,
quas puppes velis nolint transire secundis,
quo Pater aetherius mensisque accita deorum

turba et ab excelso veniat soror hospita templo.
nec te, quod solidus contra riget umbo maligni, 110
montis et immenso non umquam exesus ab aevo,
terreat: ipse adero et conamina tanta iuvabo
asperaque invitae perfringam viscera terrae.
incipi et Herculeis fidens hortatibus aude.
non Amphioniae steterint velocius arces, 115
Pergameusve labor.' dixit mentemque reliquit.

Nec mora, cum scripta formatur imagine tela.
innumerae coiere manus: his caedere silvas
et levare trabes, illis immergere curae
fundamenta solo. coquitur pars umida terrae, 120
protectura hiemes atque exclusura pruinas,
indomitusque silex curva fornace liquescit.
praecipuus sed enim labor est excindere dextra
oppositas rupes et saxa negantia ferro.
hic pater ipse loci positus Tirynthius armis, 125
insudat validaque solum deforme bipenni,
cum grave nocturna caelum subtexitur umbra,
ipse fodit, ditesque Caprae viridesque resultant
Taurubulae, et terris ingens redit aequoris echo.
non tam grande sonat motis incudibus Aetne, 130
cum Brontes Steropesque ferit, nec maior ab antris
Lemniacis fragor est ubi flammeus aegida caelat
Mulciber et castis exornat Pallada donis.
decrescunt scopuli, et rosea sub luce reversi
artifices mirantur opus. vix annus anhelat, 135
alter, et ingenti dives Tirynthius arce
despectat fluctus et iunctae tecta novercae
provocat et dignis invitat Pallada templis.
iam placidae dant signa tubae, iam fortibus ardens
fumat harena sacris. hos nec Pisaeus honores, 140
Iuppiter aut Cirrhae pater aspernetur opacae.
nil his triste locis; cedat lacrimabilis Isthmos,
cedat atrox Nemeae: litat hic felicior infans.
ipsae puniceis virides Nereides antris
exsiliunt ultro, scopulis umentibus haerent, 145

nec pudet occulte nudas spectare palaestras.
spectat et Icario nemorosus palmite Gaurus,
silvae quae fixam pelago Nesida coronat,
et placidus Limon, omenque Euploea carinis,
et Lucrina Venus, Phrygioque e vertice Graias, 150
addisces, Misene, tubas, ridetque benigna
Parthenope gentile sacrum nudosque virorum
certatus et parva suae simulacra coronae.

Quin age et ipse libens proprii certaminis actus
invicta dignare manu; seu nubila disco, 155
findere seu volucres Zephyros praecedere telo
seu tibi dulce manu Libycas nodare palaestras,
indulge sacris et, si tibi poma supersunt
Hesperidum, gremio venerabilisingere Pollae;
nam capit et tantum non degenerabit honorem., 160
quod si dulce decus viridesque resumeret annos,
(da veniam, Alcide,) fors hic et pensa tulisses.

Haec ego nascentes laetus bacchatus ad aras
libamenta tuli. nunc ipse in limine — cerno
solventem voces et talia dicta ferentem.; 165
‘macte animis opibusque meos imitate labores,
qui rigidas rupes infecundaeque pudenda
naturae deserta domas et vertis in usum
lustra habitata feris, foedeque latentia profers
numina. quae tibi nunc meritorum praemia solvam?, 170
quas referam grates? Parcarum fila tenebo
extendamque colus (duram scio vincere Mortem);
avertam luctus et tristia damna vetabo
teque nihil laesum viridi renovabo senecta
concedamque diu iuvenes spectare nepotes, 175
donec et hic sponsae maturus et illa marito,
rursus et ex illis soboles nova grexque protervus
nunc umeris inreptet avi nunc agmine blando
certatim placidae concurrat ad oscula Pollae.
nam templis numquam statuatur terminus aevi, 180
dum me flammigeri portabit machina caeli.
nec mihi plus Nemee priscumque habitabitur Argos

nec Tiburna domus solisque cubilia Gades.’

Sic ait; et tangens surgentem altaribus ignem
populeaque movens albentia tempora silva, 185
et Styga et aetherii iuravit fulmina Patris.

II. PROPEMPTICON MAECIO CELERI

‘Di quibus audaces amor est servare carinas,
saevaque ventosi mulcere pericula ponti,
sternite molle fretum placidumque advertite votis
concilium, et lenis non obstrepat unda precanti:
grande tuo rarumque damus, Neptune, profundo, 5
depositum; iuvenis dubio committitur alto
Maecius atque animae partem super aequora nostrae
maiores transferre parat. proferte benigna
sidera et antennae gemino considite cornu,
Oebalii fratres; vobis pontusque polusque, 10
luceat; Iliacae longe nimbose sororis
astra fugate, precor, totoque excludite caelo.
vos quoque caeruleum ponti, Nereides, agmen,
quis honor et regni cessit fortuna secundi,
(dicere quae magni fas sit mihi sidera ponti), 15
surgite de vitreis spumosae Doridos antris
Baianosque sinus et feta tepentibus undis
litora tranquillo certatim ambite natatu,
quaerentes ubi celsa ratis, quam scandere gaudet
nobilis Ausoniae Celer armipotentis alumnus., 20
nec quaerenda diu; modo nam trans aequora terris
prima Dicarcheis Pharium gravis intulit annum,
prima salutavit Capreas et margine dextro
sparsit Tyrrhenae Mareotica vina Minervae.
huius utrumque latus molli praecingite gyro, 25
partitaeque vices vos stuppea tendite mali
vincula, vos summis adnectite sipara velis,
vos Zephyris aperite sinus; pars transtra reponat,
pars demittat aquis curvae moderamina puppis;
sint quibus exploret primos gravis artemo flatus, 30
quaeque secuturam religent post terga phaselon
uncaeque summersae penitus retinacula vellant;
temperet haec aestus pelagusque inclinet ad ortus:
officio careat glaucarum nulla sororum.

hinc multo Proteus geminoque hinc corpore Triton, 35
praenatet, et subitis qui perdidit inguina monstros
Glaucus, adhuc patriis quotiens adlabitur oris
litoream blanda feriens Anthedona cauda.
tu tamen ante omnes diva cum matre, Palaemon,
annue, si vestras amor est mihi pandere Thebas, 40
nec cano degeneri Phoebeum Amphiona plectro.
et pater Aeolio frangit qui carcere ventos,
cui varii flatus omnisque per aequora mundi
spiritus atque hiemes nimbosaque nubila parent,
artius obiecto Borean Eurumque Notumque, 45
monte premat: soli Zephyro sit copia caeli,
solus agat puppes summasque supernatet undas
assiduus pelago; donec tua turbine nullo
laeta Paraetoniis adsignet carbasa ripis.'

Audimur. vocat ipse ratem nautasque morantes, 50
increpat. ecce meum timido iam frigore pectus
labitur et nequeo, quamvis movet ominis horror,
claudere suspensos oculorum in margine fletus.
iamque ratem terris divisit fune soluto
navita et angustum deiecit in aequora pontem., 55
saevus et e puppi longo clamore magister
dissipat amplexus atque oscula fida revellit,
nec longum cara licet in cervice morari.
attamen in terras e plebe novissimus omni
ibo, nec egrediar nisi iam currente carina., 60

Quis rude et abscissum miseris animantibus aequor
fecit iter, solidaeque pios telluris alumnos
expulit in fluctus pelagoque immisit hianti,
audax ingenii? nec enim temeraria virtus
illa magis, summae gelidum quae Pelion Ossae, 65
iunxit anhelantemque iugis bis pressit Olympum.
usque adeone parum lentas transire paludes
stagnaque et angustos summittere pontibus amnes?
imus in abruptum gentilesque undique terras
fugimus exigua clausi trabe et aere nudo., 70
inde furor ventis indignataeque procellae

et caeli fremitus et fulmina plura Tonanti.
ante rates pigro torpebant aequora somno,
nec spumare Thetis nec spargere nubila fluctus
audebant. visis tumuerunt puppibus undae, , 75
inque hominem surrexit hiems. tunc nubila Plias
Oleniumque pecus, solito tunc peior Orion.

Iusta queror. fugit ecce vagas ratis acta per undas
paulatim minor et longe servantia vincit
lumina, tot gracili ligno complexa timores, 80
quaeque super reliquos te, nostri pignus amoris
portatura, Celer. quos nunc ego pectore somnos
quosve queam perferre dies? quis cuncta paventi
nuntius an facili te praetermiserit unda
Lucani rabida ora maris, num torta Charybdis, 85
fluctuet aut Siculi populatrix virgo profundus,
quos tibi currenti praeceps gerat Hadria mores,
quae pax Carpathio, quali te subvehat aura
Doris Agenorei furtis blandita iuveni?
sed merui questus. quid enim te castra petente, 90
non vel ad ignotos ibam comes impiger Indos
Cimmeriumque chaos? starem prope bellica regis
signa mei, seu tela manu seu frena teneres,
armatis seu iura dares; operumque tuorum
etsi non socius, certe mirator adessem., 95
si quondam magno Phoenix reverendus Achilli
litus ad Iliacum Thymbraeaeque Pergama venit
imbellis tumidoque nihil iuratus Atridae,
cur nobis ignavus amor? sed pectore fido
numquam abero longisque sequar tua carbasa votis., 100

Isi, Phoroneis olim stabulata sub antris,
nunc regina Phari numenque Orientis anhelis,
excipe multisono puppem Mareotida sistro;
ac iuvenem egregium, Latius cui ductor Eoa
signa Palaestinasque dedit frenare cohortes, 105
ipsa manu placida per limina festa sacrosque
duc portus urbesque tuas. te praeside noscat
unde paludosi fecunda licentia Nili,

cur vada desidant et ripa coerceat undas
Cecropio stagnata luto, cur invida Memphis, , 110
curve Therapnaei lasciviat ora Canopi,
cur servet Pharias Lethaeus ianitor aras,
vilis cur magnos aequent animalia divos;
quae sibi praesternat vivax altaria Phoenix,
quos dignetur agros aut quo se gurgite Nili, 115
mergat adoratus trepidis pastoribus Apis.
duc et ad Emathios manes ubi belliger urbis
conditor Hyblaeo perfusus nectare durat,
anguiferamque domum blando qua mersa veneno
Actias Ausonias fugit Cleopatra catenas., 120
usque et in Assyrias sedes mandataque castra
prosequere et Marti iuvenem, dea, trade Latino.
nec novus hospes erit: puer his sudavit in arvis
notus adhuc tantum maioris lumine clavi,
iam tamen et turmas facili praevertere gyro, 125
fortis et Eoas iaculo damnare sagittas.

Ergo erit illa dies, qua te maiora daturus
Caesar ab emerito iubeat discedere bello,
at nos hoc iterum stantes in litore vastos
cernemus fluctus aliasque rogabimus auras., 130
o tum quantus ego aut quanta votiva movebo
pectra lyra, cum me magna cervice ligatum
attolles umeris atque in mea pectora primum
incumbes e puppe novus, servataque reddes
colloquia inque vicem medios narrabimus annos;, 135
tu rapidum Euphraten et regia Bactra sacrasque
antiquae Babylonis opes et Zeuma, Latinae
pacis iter, qua dulce nemus florentis Idymes,
qua pretiosa Tyros rubeat, qua purpura suco
Sidoniis iterata cadis, ubi germine primum, 140
candida felices sudent opobalsama virgae;
ast ego, devictis dederim quae busta Pelasgis
quaeve laboratas claudat mihi pagina Thebas.

III. CONSOLATIO AD CLAUDIVM ETRVSCVM

Summa deum, Pietas, cuius gratissima caelo,
rara profanatas inspectant numina terras,
huc vittata comam niveoque insignis amictu,
qualis adhuc praesens nullaque expulsa nocentum
fraude rudes populos atque aurea regna colebas, 5
mitibus exsequiis ades et lugentis Etrusci
cerne pios fletus laudataque lumina terge.
nam quis inexpleto rumpentem pectora questu
complexumque rogos incumbentemque favillis
aspiciens non aut primaevae funera plangi, 10
coniugis aut nati modo pubescentia credat
ora rapi flammis? pater est qui fletur. adeste
dique hominesque sacris. procul hinc, procul ite nocentes,
si cui corde nefas tacitum fessique senectus
longa patris, si quis pulsatae conscius umquam, 15
matris et inferna rigidum timet Aeacon urna:
insontes castosque voco. tenet ecce seniles
leniter implicitos vultus sanctamque parentis
canitiem spargit lacrimis animaeque supremum
frigus amat; celeres genitoris filius annos, 20
(mira fides!) nigrasque putat properasse sorores.

Exsultent placidi Lethaea ad flumina manes,
Elysiae gaudete domus, dateserta per aras,
festaque pallentes hilarent altaria lucos.
felix a!, nimium felix plorataque nato, 25
umbra venit. longe Furiarum sibila, longe
tergeminus custos, penitus via longa patecat
manibus egregiis. eat horrendumque silentis
accedat domini solium, gratesque supremas
perferat, et totidem iuveni roget anxius annos., 30

Macte pio gemitu! dabimus solacia dignis
luctibus Aoniasque tuo sacrabimus ultro
inferias, Etrusce, seni! tu largus Eoa
germina, tu messes Cilicumque Arabumque superbas

merge rogis; ferat ignis opes heredis et alto, 35
aggere missuri nitido pia nubila caelo
stipentur cineres: nos non arsura feremus
munera, venturosque tuus durabit in annos
me monstrante dolor. neque enim mihi flere parentem
ignotum; similis gemui proiectus ad ignem., 40
ille mihi tua damna dies compescere cantu
suadet: et ipse tuli quos nunc tibi confero questus.

Non tibi clara quidem, senior placidissime, gentis
linea nec proavis demissum stemma, sed ingens
supplevit fortuna genus culpamque parentum, 45
occuluit. nec enim dominos de plebe tulisti,
sed quibus occasus pariter famulantur et ortus.
nec pudor iste tibi: quid enim terrisque poloque
parendi sine lege manet? vice cuncta reguntur
alternisque premunt. propriis sub regibus omnis, 50
terra; premit felix regum diademata Roma;
hanc ducibus frenare datum; mox crescit in illos
imperium superis. sed habent et numina legem:
servit et astrorum velox chorus et vaga servit
luna, nec iniussae totiens redit orbita luci., 55
et (modo si fas est aequare iacentia summis)
pertulit et saevi Tirynthius horrida regis
pacta, nec erubuit famulantis fistula Phoebi.

Sed neque barbaricis Latio transmissus ab oris:
Smyrna tibi gentile solum potusque verendo, 60
fonte Meles Hermique vadum, quo Lydius intrat
Bacchus et aurato reficit sua cornua limo.
laeta dehinc series variisque ex ordine curis
auctus honos; semperque gradi prope numina, semper
Caesareum coluisse latus sacrisque deorum, 65
arcanis haerere datum. Tibereia primum
aula tibi vixdum ora nova mutante iuventa
panditur (hic annis multa super indole victis
libertas oblata venit) nec proximus heres,
immitis quamquam et Furiis agitatus, abegit., 70
hinc et in Arctoas tenuis comes usque pruinas

terribilem affatu passus visuque tyrannum
immanemque suis, ut qui metuenda ferarum
corda domant mersasque iubent iam sanguine tacto
reddere ab ore manus et nulla vivere praeda., 75
praecipuos sed enim merito surrexit in actus
nondum stelligerum senior dimissus in axem
Claudius et longo transmittit habere nepoti.
quis superos metuens pariter tot templa, tot aras
promeruisse datur? summi Iovis aliger Arcas, 80
nuntius; imbrifera potitur Thaumantide Iuno;
stat celer obsequio iussa ad Neptunia Triton:
tu totiens mutata ducum iuga rite tulisti
integer, inque omni felix tua cumba profundo.

Iamque piam lux alta domum praecelsaque toto, 85
intravit Fortuna gradu; iam creditur uni
sanctarum digestus opum partaeque per omnis
divitiae populos magnique impendia mundi.
quicquid ab auriferis eiecat Hiberia fassis,
Dalmatico quod monte nitet, quod messibus Afris, 90
verritur, aestiferi quicquid terit area Nili,
quodque legit mersus pelagi scrutator Eoi,
et Lacedaemonii pecuaria culta Galesi
perspicuaeque nives Massylaque robora et Indi
dentis honos: uni parent commissa ministro, 95
quae Boreas quaeque Eurus atrox, quae nubilus Auster
invehit: hibernos citius numeraveris imbres
silvarumque comas. vigil iste animique sagacis
et citus evolvit quantum Romana sub omni
pila die quantumque tribus, quid templa, quid alti, 100
undarum cursus, quid propugnacula poscant
aequoris aut longe series porrecta viarum;
quod domini celsis niteat laquearibus aurum,
quae divum in vultus igni formanda liquescat
massa, quid Ausoniae scriptum crepet igne Monetae., 105

Hinc tibi rara quies animoque exclusa voluptas,
exiguaque dapes et numquam laesa profundo
cura mero; sed iura tamen genialia cordi

et mentem vincere toris ac iungere festa
conubia et fidos domino genuisse clientes., 110
quis sublime genus formamque insignis Etruscae
nesciat? haudquaquam proprio mihi cognita visu,
sed decus eximium famae par reddit imago,
et sibimet similis natorum gratia monstrat.
nec vulgare genus; fasces summamque curulem, 115
frater et Ausonios enses mandataque fidus
signa tulit, cum prima truces amentia Dacos
impulit et magno gens est damnata triumpho.
sic quicquid patrio cessatum a sanguine, mater
reddidit, obscurumque latus clarescere vidit, 120
conubio gavisa domus. nec pignora longe;
quippe bis ad partus venit Lucina manuque
ipsa levi gravidos tetigit fecunda labores.
felix a! si longa dies, si cernere vultus
natorum viridisque genas tibi iusta dedissent, 125
stamina. sed media cecidere abrupta iuventa
gaudia, florentesque manu scidit Atropos annos;
qualia pallentes declinant lilia culmos
pubentesque rosae primos moriuntur ad austros,
aut ubi verna novis expirat purpura pratis., 130
illa, sagittiferi, circumvolitastis, Amores,
funera maternoque rogos unxistis amomo;
nec modus aut pennis laceris aut crinibus ignem
spargere, collectaeque pyram struxere pharetrae.
quas tunc inferias aut quae lamenta dedisses , 135
maternis, Etrusce, rogis, qui funera patris
haud matura putas atque hos pius ingemis annos!

Illum et qui nutu superas nunc temperat arces,
progeniem claram terris partitus et astris,
laetus Idymaei donavit honore triumpho, 140
dignatusque loco victricis et ordine pompae
non vetuit, tenuesque nihil minuere parentes.
atque idem in cuneos populo deduxit equestres
mutavitque genus laevaeque ignobile ferrum
exuit et celso natorum aequavit honorem., 145

dextra bis octonis fluxerunt saecula lustris,
atque aevi sine nube tenor. quam dives in usus
natorum totoque volens excedere censu,
testis adhuc largi nitor inde assuetus Etrusci,
cui tua non humilis dedit indulgentia mores:, 150
hunc siquidem amplexu semper revocante tenebas
blandus et imperio numquam pater; huius honori
pronior ipse etiam gaudebat cedere frater.

Quas tibi devoti iuvenes pro patre renato,
summe ducum, grates, aut quae pia vota rependunt!, 155
tu (seu tarda situ rebusque exhausta senectus
erravit, seu blanda diu Fortuna regressum
maluit) attonitum et venturi fulminis ictus
horrentem tonitru tantum lenique procella
contentus monuisse senem; cumque horrida supra, 160
aequora curarum socius procul Itala rura
linqueret, hic molles Campani litoris oras
et Diomedea concedere iussus in arces,
atque hospes, non exsul, erat. nec longa moratus
Romuleum reseras iterum, Germanice, limen, 165
maerentemque foves inclinatosque penates
erigis. haut mirum, ductor placidissime, quando
haec est quae victis parcentia foedera Cattis
quaeque suum Dacis donat clementia montem,
quae modo Marcomanos post horrida bella vagosque , 170
Sauromatas Latio non est dignata triumpho.

Iamque in fine dies, et inexorabile pensum
deficit. hic maesti pietas me poscit Etrusci
qualia nec Sicalae moderantur carmina rupes
nec fati iam certus olor saevique marita, 175
Tereos. heu quantis lassantem brachia vidi
planctibus et prono fusum super oscula vultu!
vix famuli comitesque tenent, vix arduus ignis
summovet. haud aliter gemuit periuria Theseus
litore, qui falsis deceperat Aegea velis., 180
tunc immane gemens foedatusque ora tepentes
affatur cineres: 'cur nos, fidissime, linquis

Fortuna redeunte, pater? modo numina magni
praesidis atque breves superum placavimus iras,
nec frueris; tantique orbatus muneris usu, 185
ad manes, ingrata, fugis. nec flectere Parcas
aut placare malae datur aspera numina Lethes?
felix, cui magna patrem cervice vehenti
sacra Mycenaeae patuit reverentia flammae,
quique tener saevis genitorem Scipio Poenis, 190
abstulit, et Lydi pietas temeraria Lausi.
ergo et Thessalici coniunx pensare mariti
funus et immitem potuit Styga vincere supplex
Thracius? hoc quanto melius pro patre liceret!
non totus rapiere tamen, nec funera mittam, 195
longius; hic manes, hic intra tecta tenebo:
tu custos dominusque laris, tibi cuncta tuorum
parebunt; ego rite minor semperque secundus
assiduas libabo dapes et pocula sacris
manibus effigiesque colam: te lucida saxa, 200
te similem doctae referet mihi linea cerae;
nunc ebur et fulvum vultus imitabitur aurum.
inde viam morum longaeque examina vitae
adfatusque pios monituraque somnia poscam.'

Talia dicentem genitor dulcedine laeta, 205
audit, et immites lente descendit ad umbras
verbaque dilectae fert narraturus Etruscae.

Salve supremum, senior mitissime patrum,
supremumque vale, qui numquam sospite nato
triste chaos maestique situs patiere sepulcri., 210
semper odoratis spirabunt floribus arae,
semper et Assyrios felix bibit urna liquores
et lacrimas, qui maior honos. hic sacra litabit
manibus eque tua tumulum tellure levabit.
nostra quoque exemplo meritis tibi carmina sancit, 215
hoc etiam gaudens cinerem donasse sepulcro.

IV. CAPILLI FLAVI EARINI

Ite, comae, facilemque precor transcurrere pontum,
ite coronato recubantes molliter auro;
ite, dabit cursus mitis Cytherea secundos
placabitque notos, fors et de puppe timenda
transferet inque sua ducet super aequora concha., 5

Accipe laudatos, iuvenis Phoebeie, crines
quos tibi Caesareus donat puer, accipe laetus
intonsoque ostende patri. sine dulce nitentes
comparet atque diu fratris putet esse Lyaei.
forsan et ipse comae numquam labentis honorem, 10
praemetet atque alio clusum tibi ponet in auro.

Pergame, pinifera multum felicior Ida,
illa licet sacrae placeat sibi nube rapinae
(nempe dedit superis illum quem turbida semper
Iuno videt refugitque manum nectarque recusat), 15
at tu grata deis pulchroque insignis alumno
misisti Latio, placida quem fronte ministrum
Iuppiter Ausonius pariter Romanaque Iuno
aspiciunt et uterque probant. nec tanta potenti
terrarum domino divum sine mente voluptas., 20

Dicitur Idalios Erycis de vertice lucos
dum petit et molles agitat Venus aurea cygnos,
Pergameas intrasse domos ubi maximus aegris
auxiliator adest et festinantia sistens
fata salutifero mitis deus incubat angui., 25
hic puerum egregiae praeclarum sidere formae
ipsius ante dei ludentem conspicit aras.
ac primum subita paulum decepta figura
natorum de plebe putat; sed non erat illi
arcus et ex umeris nullae fulgentibus umbrae., 30
miratur puerile decus, vultumque comasque
aspiciens ‘tunc Ausonias’ ait ‘ibis ad arces,
neglectus Veneri? tu sordida tecta iugumque
servitii vulgare feres? procul absit: ego isti

quem meruit formae dominum dabo. vade age mecum, 35
vade, puer: ducam volucris per sidera curru
donum immane duci; nec te plebeia manebunt
iura: Palatino famulus deberis amori.
nil ego, nil, fateor, toto tam dulce sub orbe
aut vidi aut genui. cedit tibi Latmius ultro, 40
Sangariusque puer, quemque irrita fontis imago
et sterilis consumpsit amor. te caerula Nais
mallet et adpressa traxisset fortius urna.
tu puer ante omnis; solus formosior ille
cui daberis.' sic orsa leves secum ipsa per auras, 45
tollit olorinaque iubet considerare biga.
nec mora. iam Latii montes veterisque penates
Evandri, quos mole nova pater inclitus orbis
excolit et summis aequat Germanicus astris.
tunc propior iam cura deae, quae forma capillis, 50
optima, quae vestis roseos accendere vultus
apta, quod in digitis, collo quod dignius aurum.
norat caelestis oculos ducis ipsaque taedas
iunxerat et plena dederat conubia dextra.
sic ornat crines, Tyrios sic fundit amictus, 55
dat radios ignemque suum. cessere priores
deliciae famulumque greges; hic pocula magno
prima duci murrasque graves crystallaque portat
candidiore manu: crescit nova gratia Baccho.
Care puer superis, qui praelibare verendum, 60
nectar et ingentem totiens contingere dextram
electus quam nosse Getae, quam tangere Persae
Armenique Indique petunt! o sidere dextro
edite, multa tibi divum indulgentia favit.
olim etiam, ne prima genas lanugo nitentes, 65
carperet et pulchrae fuscaret gratia formae,
ipse deus patriae celsam trans aequora liquit
Pergamon. haud ulli puerum mollire potestas
credita, sed tacita iuvenis Phoebeius arte
leniter haud ullo concussum vulnere corpus, 70
de sexu transire iubet. tamen anxia curis

mordetur puerique timet Cytherea dolores.
nondum pulchra ducis clementia coeperat ortu
intactos servare mares; nunc frangere sexum
atque hominem mutare nefas, gavisaeque solos, 75
quos genuit natura videt, nec lege sinistra
ferre timent famulae natorum pondera matres.

Tu quoque nunc, iuvenis, genitus si tardius esses,
umbratusque genas et adultos fortior artus
non unum gaudens Phoebea ad limina munus, 80
misisses; patrias nunc solus crinis ad oras
naviget. hunc multo Paphie saturabat amomo,
hunc nova tergemina pectebat Gratia dextra.
huic et purpurei cedit coma saucia Nisi,
et quam Sperchio tumidus servabat Achilles., 85
ipsi, cum primum niveam praecerpere frontem
decretum est umerosque manu nudare nitentes,
adcurrunt teneri Paphia cum matre volucres
expediuntque comas et serica pectore ponunt
pallia. tunc iunctis crinem incidere sagittis, 90
atque auro gemmisque locant; rapit ipsa cadentem
mater et arcanos iterat Cytherea liquores.
tunc puer e turba, manibus qui forte supinis
nobile gemmato speculum portaverat auro,
'hoc quoque demus' ait 'patriis (nec gratius ullum, 95
munus erit) templis, ipsoque potentius auro.
tu modo fige aciem et vultus hic usque relinque.'
sic ait et speculum reclusit imagine raptā.

At puer egregius tendens ad sidera palmas,
'his mihi pro donis, hominum mitissime custos, 100
si merui, longa dominum renovare iuventa
atque orbi servare velis! hoc sidera mecum,
hoc undae terraeque rogant. eat, oro, per annos
Iliacos Pyliosque simul, propriosque penates
gaudeat et secum Tarpeia senescere templa.', 105
sic ait et motas miratur Pergamos aras.

V. <AD VXOREM>

Quid mihi maesta die, sociis quid noctibus, uxor,
anxia pervigili ducis suspiria cura?
non metuo ne laesa fides aut pectore in isto
alter amor; nullis in te datur ire sagittis
(audiat infesto licet hoc Rhamnusia vultu), 5
non datur. et si egomet patrio de litore raptus
quattuor emeritis per bella, per aequora lustris
errarem, tu mille procos intacta fugares,
non intersectas commenta retexere telas,
sed sine fraude palam, thalamosque armata negasses. , 10
dic tamen, unde alta mihi fronte et nubila vultus?
anne quod Euboicos fessus remeare penates
auguror et patria senium componere terra?
cur hoc triste tibi? certe lascivia corde
nulla nec aut rapidi mulcent te proelia Circi, 15
aut intrat sensus clamosi turba theatri;
sed probitas et opaca quies et sordida numquam
gaudia. quas autem comitem te rapto per undas?
quamquam, et si gelidas irem mansurus ad Arctos
vel super Hesperiae vada caligantia Thyles, 20
aut septemgemini caput impenetrabile Nili,
hortarere vias. etenim tua (nempe benigna
quam mihi sorte Venus iunctam florentibus annis
servat et in senium), tua, quae me vulnere primo
intactum thalamis et adhuc iuvenile vagantem, 25
fixisti, tua frena libens docilisque recepi,
et semel insertas non mutaturus habenas
usque premo. tu me nitidis Albana ferentem
dona comis sanctoque indutum Caesaris auro
visceribus complexa tuis, sertisque dedisti, 30
oscula anghela meis; tu, cum Capitolia nostrae
infitiata lyrae, saevum ingratumque dolebas
mecum victa Iovem; tu procurrentia primis
carmina nostra sonis, totasque in murmure noctes

aure rapis vigili; longi tu sola laboris, 35
conscia, cumque tuis crevit mea Thebais annis.
qualem te nuper Stygias prope raptus ad umbras
cum iam Lethaeos audirem comminus amnes,
aspexi, tenuique oculos iam morte cadentes!
scilicet exhausti Lachesis mihi tempora fati, 40
te tantum miserata dedit, superique potentes
invidiam timuere tuam. post ista propinquum
nunc iter optandosque sinus comes ire moraris?
heu ubi nota fides totque explorata per usus,
qua veteres Latias Graias heroidas aequas? , 45
isset ad Iliacas (quid enim deterret amantes?)
Penelope gavis domos, si passus Vlixes;
questa est Aegiale, questa est Meliboea relinqui,
et quam (quam saevi!) fecerunt maenada planctus.
nec minor his tu nosse fidem vitamque maritis, 50
dedere. sic certe cineres umbramque priorem
quaeris adhuc, sic exsequias amplexa canori
coniugis ingentes iterasti pectore planctus,
iam mea. nec pietas alia est tibi curaque natae:
sic et mater amas, sic numquam corde recedit, 55
nata tuo, fixamque animi penetralibus imis
nocte dieque tenes. non sic Trachinia nidos
Alcyone, vernos non sic Philomela penates
circumit amplectens animamque in pignora transfert.
et nunc illa tenet viduo quod sola cubili, 60
otia iam pulchrae terit infecunda iuventae.
sed venient, plenis venient conubia taedis.
sic certe formaeque bonis animique meretur;
sive chelyn complexa petit seu voce paterna
discendum Musis sonat et mea carmina flectit, 65
candida seu molli diducit brachia motu,
ingenium probitas artemque modestia vincit.
nonne leves pueros, non te, Cytherea, pudebit
hoc cessare decus? nec tantum Roma iugales
conciliare toros festasque accendere taedas, 70
fertilis: et nostra generi tellure dabuntur.

non adeo Vesuvinus apex et flammea diri
montis hiems trepidas exhausit civibus urbes:
stant populisque vigent. hinc auspice condita Phoebo
tectata Dicarchei portusque et litora mundi, 75
hospita: at hinc magnae tractus imitantia Romae
quae Capys advectis implevit moenia Teucris.
nostra quoque et propriis tenuis nec rara colonis
Parthenope, cui mite solum trans aequora vectae
ipse Dionaea monstravit Apollo columba., 80

Has ego te sedes (nam nec mihi barbara Thrace
nec Libye natale solum) transferre laboro,
quas et mollis hiems et frigida temperat aestas,
quas imbelle fretum torpentibus adluit undis.
pax secunda locis et desidis otia vitae, 85
et numquam turbata quies somnique peracti.
nulla foro rabies aut strictae in iurgia leges:
morum iura viris solum et sine fascibus aequum.
quid nunc magnificas species cultusque locorum
templaque et innumeris spatia interstincta columnis, 90
et geminam molem nudi tectique theatri
et Capitolinis quinquennia proxima lustris,
quid laudem litus libertatemque Menandri,
quam Romanus honos et Graia licentia miscent?
nec desunt variae circa oblectamina vitae:, 95
sive vaporiferas, blandissima litora, Baias,
entheae fatidicae seu visere tecta Sibyllae
dulce sit Iliacoque iugum memorabile remo,
seu tibi Bacchei vineta madentia Gauri
Teleboumque domos, trepidis ubi dulcia nautis, 100
lumina noctivagae tollit Pharos aemula lunae,
caraque non molli iuga Surrentina Lyaeo,
quae meus ante alios habitator Pollius auget,
Dinarumque lacus medicos Stabiasque renatas.
mille tibi nostrae referam telluris amores?, 105
sed satis hoc, coniunx, satis est dixisse: creavit
me tibi, me socium longos astrinxit in annos.
nonne haec amborum genetrix altrixque videri

digna? sed ingratus qui plura adnecto tuisque
moribus indubito: venies, carissima coniunx, 110
praeveniesque etiam. sine me tibi ductor aquarum
Thybris et armiferi sordebunt tecta Quirini.

Liber Quartus

STATIVS MARCELLO SVO SALVTEM

Inveni librum, Marcelle carissime, quem pietati tuae dedicarem. reor equidem aliter quam invocato numine maximi imperatoris nullum opusculum meum coepisse; sed hic liber tres habet [.] se quam quod quarta ad honorem tuum pertinet. primo autem septimum decimum Germanici nostri consulatum adoravi; secundo gratias egi sacratissimis eius epulis honoratus; tertio viam Domitianam miratus sum qua gravissimam harenarum moram exemit: cuius beneficio tu quoque maturius epistolam meam accipies, quam tibi in hoc libro a Neapoli scribo. proximum est lyricum carmen ad Septimium Severum, iuvenem, uti scis, inter ornatissimos secundi ordinis, tuum quidem et condiscipulum, sed mihi citra hoc quoque ius artissime carum. nam Vindicis nostri Herculem Epitrapezion secundum honorem, quem de me et de ipsis studiis meretur, imputare etiam tibi possum. Maximum Vibium et dignitatis et eloquentiae nomine a nobis diligere satis eram testatus epistola, quam ad illum de editione Thebaidos meae publicavi; sed nunc quoque eum reverti maturius ex Dalmatia rogo. iuncta est ecloga ad municipem meum Iulium Menecraten, splendidum iuvenem et Polli mei generum, cui gratulor quod Neapolim nostram numero liberorum honestaverit. Plotio Grypo, maioris gradus iuveni, dignius opusculum reddam, sed interim hendecasyllabos quos Saturnalibus una risimus, huic volumini inserui. quare ergo plura in quarto Silvarum quam in prioribus? ne se putent aliquid egisse, qui reprehenderunt ut audio, quod hoc stili genus edidissem. primum supervacuum est dissuadere rem factam; deinde multa ex illis iam domino Caesari dederam, et quanto hoc plus est quam edere! exercere autem ioco non licet? 'secreto' inquit. sed et sphaeromachias spectamus et palaris lusio admittit. novissime: quisquis ex meis invitus aliquid legit, statim se profiteatur adversum. ita quare consilio eius accedam? in summam, nempe ego sum qui traducor: taceat et gaudeat. hunc tamen librum tu, Marcelle, defendes. et, si videtur, hactenus, sin minus, reprehendemur. vale.

I. SEPTIMVS DECIMVS CONSVLATVS IMP. AVG. GERMANICI

Laeta bis octonis accedit purpura fastis
Caesaris insignemque aperit Germanicus annum,
atque oritur cum sole novo, cum grandibus astris
clarius ipse nitens et primo maior Eoo.
exsultent leges Latiae, gaudete, curules, 5
et septemgemino iactantior aethera pulset
Roma iugo, plusque ante alias Evandrius arces
collis ovet: subiere novi Palatia fasces
et requiem bis sextus honos precibusque receptis
curia Caesareum gaudet vicisse pudorem. 10
ipse etiam immensi reparator maximus aevi
attollit vultus et utroque a limine grates
Ianus agit, quem tu vicina Pace ligatum
omnia iussisti componere bella novique
in leges iurare fori. levat ecce supinas 15
hinc atque inde manus geminaque haec voce profatur:
'salve, magne parens mundi, qui saecula mecum
instaurare paras, talem te cernere semper
mense meo tua Roma cupit; sic tempora nasci,
sic annos intrare decet. da gaudia fastis 20
continua; hos umeros multo sinus ambiat ostro
et properata tuae manibus praetexta Minervae.
aspicis ut templis alius nitor, altior aris
ignis et ipsa meae tepeant tibi sidera brumae,
moribus atque tuis gaudent turmaeque tribusque 25
purpureique patres, lucemque a consule ducit
omnis honos. quid tale, precor, prior annus habebat?
dic age, Roma potens, et mecum, longa Vetustas,
dinumera fastos nec parva exempla recense,
sed quae sola meus dignetur vincere Caesar. 30
ter Latio deciesque tulit labentibus annis
Augustus fasces, sed coepit sero mereri:
tu iuvenis praegressus avos. et quanta recusas,

quanta vetas! flectere tamen precibusque senatus
permittes hunc saepe diem. manet insuper ordo 35
longior, et totidem felix tibi Roma curules
terque quaterque dabit. mecum altera saecula condes,
et tibi longaevi renovabitur ara parentis;
mille tropaea feres, tantum permitte triumphos.
restat Bactra novis, restat Babylona tributis 40
frenari; nondum gremio Iovis Indica laurus,
nondum Arabes Seresque rogant, nondum omnis honorem
annus habet, cupiuntque decem tua nomina menses.’

Sic Ianus, clausoque libens se poste recepit.
tunc omnes patuere dei laetoque dederunt 45
signa polo, longamque tibi rex, magne, iuventam
annuit atque suos promisit Iuppiter annos.

II. EVCHARISTICON AD IMP. AVG. GERM. DOMITIANVM

Regia Sidoniae convivia laudat Elissae,
qui magnum Aenean Laurentibus intulit arvis;
Alcinoique dapes mansuro carmine monstrat,
aequore qui multo reducem consumpsit Vlixem:
ast ego cui sacrae Caesar nova gaudia cenae 5
nunc primum dominaque dedit consurgere mensa,
qua celebrem mea vota lyra, quas solvere grates
sufficiam? non, si pariter mihi vertice laeto
nectat odoratas et Smyrna et Mantua lauros,
digna loquar. mediis videor discumbere in astris 10
cum Iove et Iliaca porrectum sumere dextra
immortale merum. steriles transmisimus annos:
haec aevi mihi prima dies, hic limina vitae.
tene ego, regnator terrarum orbisque subacti
magne parens, te, spes hominum, te, cura deorum, 15
cerno iacens? datur haec iuxta, datur ora tueri
vina inter mensasque, et non assurgere fas est?

Tectum augustum, ingens, non centum insigne columnis,
sed quantae superos caelumque Atlante remisso
sustentare queant. stupet hoc vicina Tonantis 20
regia, teque pari laetantur sede locatum
numina. nec magnum properes excedere caelum:
tanta patet moles effusaeque impetus aulae
liberior, campi multumque amplexus operti
aetheros, et tantum domino minor; ille penates 25
implet et ingenti genio iuvat. aemulus illic
mons Libys Iliacusque nitet, % multa Syene
et Chios et glaucae certantia Doridi saxa;
Lunaque portandis tantum suffecta columnis.
longa supra species: fessis vix culmina prenas 30
visibus auratique putes laquearia caeli.
hic cum Romuleos procures trabeataque Caesar
agmina mille simul iussit discumbere mensis,

ipsa sinus accincta Ceres Bacchusque laborat
sufficere. aetherii felix sic orbita fluxit 35
Triptolemi, sic vitifero sub palmite nudos
umbravit colles et sobria rura Lyaeus.

Sed mihi non epulas Indisque innixa columnis
robora Maurorum famulasque ex ordine turmas,
ipsum, ipsum cupido tantum spectare vacavit 40
tranquillum vultu sed maiestate serena
mulcentem radios summittentemque modeste
fortunae vexilla suae; tamen ore nitebat
dissimulatus honos. talem quoque barbarus hostis
posset et ignotae conspectum agnoscere gentes. 45
non aliter gelida Rhodopes in valle recumbit
dimissis Gradivus equis; sic lubrica ponit
membra Therapnaea resolutus gymnade Pollux,
sic iacet ad Gangen Indis ululantibus Euhæ,
sic gravis Alcides post horrida iussa reversus 50
gaudebat strato latus adclinare leoni.
parva loquor necdum aequo tuos, Germanice, vultus:
talīs, ubi Oceani finem mensasque revisit
Aethiopum sacro diffusus nectare vultus
dux superum secreta iubet dare carmina Musas 55
et Pallenæos Phoebum laudare triumphos.

Di tibi (namque animas saepe exaudire minores
dicuntur) patriæ bis terque exire senectæ
annuerint fines. rata numina miseris astris,
templaque des habitesque domos. saepe annua pandas 60
limina, saepe novo Ianum lictore salutes,
saepe coronatis iteris quinquennia lustris.
qua mihi felices epulas mensaeque dedisti
sacra tuæ, talis longo post tempore venit
lux mihi, Troianæ qualis sub collibus Albæ, 65
cum modo Germanas acies modo Dacæ sonantem
proelia Palladio tua me manus induit auro.

III. VIA DOMITIANA

Quis duri silicis gravisque ferri
immanis sonus aequori propinquum
saxosae latus Appiae replevit?
certe non Libycae sonant catervae,
nec dux advena peierante bello 5
Campanos quatit inquietus agros,
nec frangit vada montibusque caesis
inducit Nero sordidas paludes;
sed qui limina bellicosa Iani
iustis legibus et foro coronat, 10
quis castae Cereri diu negata
reddit iugera sobriasque terras,
quis fortem vetat interire sexum
et censor prohibet mares adultos
pulchrae supplicium timere formae; 15
qui reddit Capitolio Tonantem
et Pacem propria domo reponit,
qui genti patriae futura semper
sancit lumina Flaviumque caelum,
hic segnis populi vias gravatus 20
et campos iter omne detinentes
longos eximit ambitus novoque
iniectu solidat graves harenas,
gaudens Euboicae domum Sibyllae
Gauranosque sinus et aestuantes 25
septem montibus admovere Baias.

Hic quondam piger axe vectus uno
nutabat cruce pendula viator
sorbebatque rotas maligna tellus,
et plebs in mediis Latina campis 30
horrebat mala navigationis;
nec cursus agiles, sed impeditum
tardabant iter orbitae tacentes,
dum pondus nimium querens sub alta

repit languida quadrupes statera. 35
at nunc, quae solidum diem terebat,
horarum via facta vix duarum.
non tensae volucrum per astra pennae,
nec velocius ibitis, carinae.

Hic primus labor incohare sulcos 40
et rescindere limites et alto
egestu penitus cavare terras;
mox haustas aliter replere fossas
et summo gremium parare dorso,
ne nutent sola, ne maligna sedes 45
et pressis dubium cubile saxis;
tunc umbonibus hinc et hinc coactis
et crebris iter alligare gonfis.
o quantae pariter manus laborant!
hi caedunt nemus exuuntque montes, 50
hi ferro scopulos trabesque levant;
illi saxa ligant opusque texunt
cocto pulvere sordidoque tofo;
hi siccant bibulas manu lacunas
et longe fluvios agunt minores. 55
hae possent et Athon cavare dextrae
et maestum pelagus gementis Helles
intercludere ponte non natanti.
his parvus, nisi cliviae vetarent,
Inous freta miscuisset Isthmos. 60

Fervent litora mobilesque silvae,
it longus medias fragor per urbes,
atque echon simul hinc et inde fractam
Gauro Massicus uvifer remittit.
miratur sonitum quieta Cyme 65
et Literna palus pigerque Safon.

At flavum caput umidumque late
crinem mollibus impeditus ulvis
Vulturnus levat ora maximoque
pontis Caesarei reclinus arcu 70
raucis talia faucibus redundat:

‘camporum bone conditor meorum,
quis me vallibus aviis refusum
et ripas habitare nescientem
recti legibus alvei ligasti! 75
et nunc ille ego turbidus minaxque,
vix passus dubias prius carinas,
iam pontem fero perviusque calcor;
qui terras rapere et rotare silvas
assueram (pudet!), amnis esse coepi; 80
sed grates ago servitusque tanti est,
quod sub te duce, te iubente, cessi,
quod tu maximus arbiter meaeque
victor perpetuus legere ripae.
et nunc limite me colis beato 85
nec sordere sinis malumque late
deterges sterilis soli pudorem;
ne me pulvereum gravemque caelo
Tyrrheni sinus obluat profundi
(qualis Cinyphius tacente ripa 90
Poenos Bagrada serpit inter agros),
sed talis ferar ut nitente cursu
tranquillum mare proximumque possim
puro gurgite provocare Lirim.’

Haec amnis, pariterque se levarat 95
ingenti plaga marmorata dorso.
huius ianua prosperumque limen
arcus, belligeris ducis tropaeis
et totis Ligurum nitens metallis,
quantus nubila qui coronat imbri. 100
illic flectitur excitus viator,
illic Appia se dolet relinqui.
tunc velocior acriorque cursus,
tunc ipsos iuvat impetus iugales;
ceu fessis ubi remigum lacertis 105
primae carbasa ventilatis, aurae.
ergo omnes, age, quae sub axe primo
Romani colitis fidem Parentis,

prono limite commeate gentes,
Eoae citius venite laurus: 110
nil obstat cupidis, nihil moratur.
qui primo Tiberim reliquit ortu,
primo vespere naviget Lucrinum.

Sed quam fine viae recentis imo,
qua monstrat veteres Apollo Cumas, 115
albam crinibus infulisque cerno?
visu fallimur, an sacris ab antris
profert Chalcidicas Sibylla laurus?
cedamus; chely, iam repone cantus:
vates sanctior incipit, tacendum est. 120
en! et colla rotat novisque late
bacchatur spatiis viamque replet.
tunc sic virgineo profatur ore:
'dicebam, veniet (manete campi
atque amnis), veniet favente caelo, 125
qui foedum nemus et putres harenas
celsis pontibus et via levabit.
en hic est deus, hunc iubet beatis
pro se Iuppiter imperare terris;
quo non dignior has subit habenas 130
ex quo me duce praescios Averni
Aeneas avide futura quaerens
lucos et penetravit et reliquit.
hic paci bonus, hic timendus armis,
natura melior potentiorque. 135
hic si flammigeros teneret axes,
largis, India nubibus maderes,
undaret Libye, teperet Haemus.

Salve, dux hominum et parens deorum,
provisum mihi conditumque numen. 140
nec iam putribus evoluta chartis
sollemni prece Quindecim Virorum
perlustra mea dicta, sed canentem
ipsam comminus, ut mereris, audi.
vidi quam seriem merentis aevi 145

pronectant tibi candidae sorores:
magnus te manet ordo saeculorum,
natis longior abnepotibusque
annos perpetua geres iuventa
quos fertur placidos adisse Nestor, 150
quos Tithonia computat senectus
et quantos ego Delium poposci.
iuravit tibi iam nivalis Arctus,
nunc magnos Oriens dabit triumphos.
ibis qua vagus Hercules et Euhann 155
ultra sidera flammeumque solem
et Nili caput et nives Atlantis,
et laudum cumulo beatus omni
scandes belliger abnuesque currus;
donec Troicus ignis et renatae 160
Tarpeius pater intonabit aulae,
haec donec via te regente terras
annosa magis Appia senescat.'

IV. EPISTOLA AD VITORIVM MARCELLVM

Curre per Euboicos non segnis, epistola, campos,
hac ingressa vias qua nobilis Appia crescit
in latus et molles solidus premit agger harenas;
atque ubi Romuleas velox penetraveris arces,
continuo dexteras flavi pete Thybridis oras, 5
Lydia qua penitus stagnum navale coercet
ripa suburbanisque vadum praetexitur hortis.
illic egregium formaque animisque videbis
Marcellum et celso praesignem vertice nosces.
cui primam solito vulgi de more salutem, 10
mox inclusa modis haec reddere verba memento:
‘iam terras volucremque polum fuga veris aquosi
laxat et Icariis caelum latratibus urit;
ardua iam densae rarescunt moenia Romae.
hos Praeneste sacrum, nemus hos glaciale Dianae, 15
Algidus aut horrens aut Tuscula protegit umbra,
Tiburis hi lucos Anienaque frigora captant.
te quoque clamorae quaenam plaga mitior Vrbi
subtrahit? aestivos quo decipis aere soles?
quid tuus ante omnis, tua cura potissima, Gallus, 20
nec non noster amor, dubium morumne probandus
ingeniine bonis? Latiis aestivat in oris,
anne metalliferae repetit iam moenia Lunae
Tyrrenasque domos? quod si tibi proximus haeret,
non ego nunc vestro procul a sermone recedo. 25
certum est: inde sonus geminas mihi circumit aures.
sed tu, dum nimio possessa Hyperione flagrat
torva Cleonaei iuba sideris, exue curis
pectus et assiduo temet furare labori.
et sontes operit pharetras arcumque retendit 30
Parthus, et Eleis auriga laboribus actos
Alpheo permulcet equos, et nostra fatescit
laxaturque chelys: vires instigat alitque
tempestiva quies; maior post otia virtus.

talīs cantata Briseide venit Achilles 35
acrior et positis erupit in Hectora plectris.
te quoque flammabit tacite repetita parumper
desidia et solitos novus exsultabis in actus.
certe iam Latiae non miscent iurgia leges,
et pacem piger annus habet, messesque reversae 40
dimisere forum, nec iam tibi turba reorum
vestibulo querulique rogant exire clientes.
cessat centeni moderatrix iudicis hasta,
qua tibi sublimi iam nunc celeberrima fama
eminet et iuvenis facundia praeterit annos. 45
felix curarum, cui non Heliconia cordi
serta nec imbelles Parnasi e vertice laurus,
sed viget ingenium et magnos accinctus in usus
fert animus quascumque vices. nos otia vitae
solamur cantu ventosaque gaudia famae 50
quaerimus. en egomet somnum et geniale secutus
litus ubi Ausonio se condidit hospita portu
Parthenope, tenues ignavo pollice chordas
pulso Maroneique sedens in margine templi
sumo animum et magni tumulis adcano magistri: 55
at tu, si longi cursum dabit Atropos aevi
(detque precor Latiiue ducis sic numina pergant,
quem tibi posthabito studium est coluisse Tonante,
quique tuos alio subtexit munere fasces
et spatia obliquae mandat renovare Latinae!) 60
forsitan Ausonias ibis frenare cohortes
aut Rheni populos aut nigrae litora Thyles
aut Histrium servare datur metuendaque portae
limina Caspiacae. nec enim tibi sola potentis
eloquii virtus: sunt membra accommoda bellis, 65
quique gravem tarde subeant thoraca lacerti:
seu campo pedes ire pares, est agmina supra
nutaturus apex; seu frena sonantia flectes,
serviet asper equus. nos facta aliena canendo
vergimur in senium: propriis tu pulcher in armis 70
ipse canenda geres parvoque exempla parabis

magna Getae, dignos quem iam nunc belliger actus
poscit avos praestatque domi novisse triumphos.
surge, agedum, iuvenemque puer deprinde parentem,
stemma materno felix, virtute paterna. 75
iam te blanda sinu Tyrio sibi curia felix
educat et cunctas gaudet spondere curules.'

Haec ego Chalcidicis ad te, Marcelle, sonabam
litoribus, fractas ubi Vesvius erigit iras
aemula Trinacriis volvens incendia flammis. 80
mira fides! credetne virum ventura propago,
cum segetes iterum, cum iam haec deserta virebunt,
infra urbes populosque premi proavitaque tanto
rura abiisse mari? necdum letale minari
cessat apex. procul ista tuo sint fata Teate, 85
nec Marrucinos agat haec insania montes.

Nunc si forte meis quae sint exordia musis
scire petis, iam Sidonios emensa labores
Thebais optato collegit carbasa portu
Parnasique iugis silvaeque Heliconide festis 90
tura dedit flammis et virginis exta iuvencae
votiferaque meas suspendit ab arbore vittas.
nunc vacuos crines alio subit infula nexu:
Troia quidem magnusque mihi temptatur Achilles,
sed vocat arcitenens alio pater armaque monstrat 95
Ausonii maiora ducis. trahit impetus illo
iam pridem retrahitque timor. stabuntne sub illa
mole umeri an magno vincetur pondere cervix?
dic, Marcelle, feram? fluctus an sueta minores
nosse ratis nondum Ioniis credenda periclis? 100

Iamque vale et penitus voti tibi vatis honorem
corde exire veta. nec enim Tirynthius, almae
pectus amicitiae++cedet tibi gloria fidi
Theseos, et lacerum qui circa moenia Troiae
Priamiden caeso solacia traxit amico.

V. ODE LYRICA AD SEPTIMIVM SEVERVM

Parvi beatus ruris honoribus,
qua prisca Teucros Alba colit lares,
 fortem atque facundum Severum
 non solitis fidibus saluto.
iam trux ad Arctos Parrhasias hiems 5
concessit altis obruta solibus,
 iam pontus ac tellus renident
 in Zephyros Aquilone fracto.
nunc cuncta veris; frondibus annuis
crinitur arbos, nunc volucrum novi 10
 questus inexpertumque carmen,
 quod tacita statuere bruma.
nos parca tellus pervigil et focus
culmenque multo lumine sordidum
 solantur exemptusque testa 15
 qua modo fervuerat Lyaeus.
non mille balant lanigeri greges,
nec vacca dulci mugit adultero,
 unique siquando canenti
 mutus ager domino reclamatur. 20
sed terra primis post patriam mihi
dilecta curis, hic mea carmina
 regina bellorum virago
 Caesareo peramavit auro,
cum tu sodalis dulce periculum 25
conisus omni pectore tolleres,
 ut Castor ad cunctos tremebat
 Bebryciae strepitus harenae.
tene in remotis Syrtibus avia
Leptis creavit? iam feret Indicas 30
 messes odoratisque rara
 cinnama praeripiet Sabaeis.
quis non in omni vertice Romuli
reptasse dulcem Septimium putet?

quis fonte Iuturnae relictis 35
uberibus neget esse pastum?
nec mira virtus: protinus Ausonum
portus vadosae nescius Africae
intras adoptatusque Tuscis
gurgitibus puer innatasti. 40
hinc parvus inter pignora curiae
contentus <artae> lumine purpurae
crescis, sed immensos labores
indole patricia secutus.
non sermo Poenus, non habitus tibi, 45
externa non mens: Italus, Italus.
sunt Vrbe Romanisque turmis
qui Libyam deceant alumni.
est et frementi vox hilaris foro;
venale sed non eloquium tibi, 50
ensisque vagina quiescit,
stringere ni iubeant amici.
sed rura cordi saepius et quies,
nunc in paternis sedibus et solo
Veiente, nunc frondosa supra 55
Hernica, nunc Curibus vetustis.
hic plura pones vocibus et modis
passim solutis, sed memor interim
nostri verecundo latentem
barbiton ingemina sub antro.

VI. HERCVLES EPITRAPEZIOS NOVI VINDICIS

Forte remittentem curas Phoeboque levatum
pectora, cum patulis tererem vagus otia Saepthis
iam moriente die, rapuit me cena benigni
Vindicis. haec imos animi perlapsa recessus
inconsumpta manet: neque enim ludibria ventris 5
hausimus aut epulas diverso a sole petitas
vinaque perpetuis aevo certantia fastis.
a miseri, quos nosse iuvat quid Phasidis ales
distet ab hiberna Rhodopes grue, quis magis anser
exta ferat, cur Tuscus aper generosior Vmbro, 10
lubrica qua recubent conchylia mollius alga.
nobis verus amor medioque Helicone petitus
sermo hilaresque ioci brumalem absumere noctem
suaserunt mollemque oculis expellere somnum,
donec ab Elysiis prospexit sedibus alter 15
Castor et hesternas risit Tithonia mensas.
o bona nox iunctaque utinam Tirynthia luna!
nox et Erythraeis Thetidis signanda lapillis
et memoranda diu geniumque habitura perennem!
mille ibi tunc species aerisque eborisque vetusti 20
atque locuturas mentito corpore ceras
edidici. quis namque oculis certaverit usquam
Vindicis, artificum veteres agnoscere ductus
et non inscriptis auctorem reddere signis?
hic tibi quae docto multum vigilata Myroni 25
aera, laboriferi vivant quae marmora caelo
Praxitelis, quod ebur Pisaeo pollice rasum,
quid Polycleteis iussum spirare caminis,
linea quae veterem longe fateatur Apellen,
monstrabit: namque haec, quotiens chelyn exuit, illi 30
desidia est, hic Aoniis amor avocat antris.

Haec inter castae genius tutelaque mensae
Amphitryoniades multo mea cepit amore
pectora nec longo satiavit lumina visu:

tantus honos operi finesque inclusa per artos 35
maiestas. deus ille, deus! seseque videndum
indulsit, Lysippe, tibi parvusque videri
sentirique ingens! et cum mirabilis intra
stet mensura pedem, tamen exclamare libebit,
si visus per membra feres: 'hoc pectore pressus 40
vastator Nemees; haec exitiale ferebant
robur et Argoos frangebant brachia remos.'
ac spatio tam magna brevi mendacia formae!
quis modus in dextra, quanta experientia docti
artificis curis pariter gestamina mensae 45
fingere et ingentes animo versare colossos!
tale nec Idaeis quicquam Telchines in antris
nec stolidus Brontes nec, qui polit arma deorum,
Lemnius exigua potuisset ludere massa.
nec torva effigies epulisque aliena remissis, 50
sed qualem parci domus admirata Molorchii
aut Aleae lucis vidit Tegeaea sacerdos;
qualis et Oetaeis emissus in astra favillis
nectar adhuc torva laetus Iunone bibebat:
sic mitis vultus, veluti de pectore gaudens, 55
hortatur mensas. tenet haec marcentia fratris
pocula, at haec clavae meminit manus; aspera sedis
sustinet et cultum Nemeaeo tegmine saxum.

Digna operi fortuna sacro. Pellaeus habebat
regnator laetis numen venerabile mensis 60
et comitem occasus secum portabat et ortus,
praestabatque libens modo qua diademata dextra
abstulerat dederatque et magnas verterat urbes.
semper ab hoc animos in crastina bella petebat,
huic acies semper victor narrabat opimas, 65
sive catenatos Bromio detraxerat Indos,
seu clusam magna Babylona refrugerat hasta,
seu Pelopis terras libertatemque Pelasgam
obruerat bello; magnoque ex agmine laudum
fertur Thebanos tantum excusasse triumphos. 70
ille etiam, magnos fatis rumpentibus actus,

cum traheret letale merum, iam mortis opaca
nube gravis vultus alios in numine caro
aeraque supremis timuit sudantia mensis.

Mox Nasamoniaco decus admirabile regi 75
possessum; fortique deo libavit honores
semper atrox dextra periuroque ense superbus
Hannibal. Italicae perfusum sanguine gentis
diraque Romuleis portantem incendia tectis
oderat, et cum epulas, et cum Lenaea dicaret 80
dona, deus castris maerens comes ire nefandis,
praecipue cum sacrilega face miscuit arces
ipsius immeritaeque domos ac templa Sagunti
polluit et populis Furias immisit honestas.

Nec post Sidonii letum ducis aere potita 85
egregio plebeia domus. convivia Syllae
ornabat semper claros intrare penates
assuetum et felix dominorum stemmate signum.

Nunc quoque, si mores humanaque pectora curae
nosse deis, non aula quidem, Tirynthie, nec te 90
regius ambit honos, sed casta ignaraque culpa
mens domini, cui prisca fides coeptaeque perenne
foedus amicitiae. scit adhuc florente sub aevo
par magnis Vestinus avis, quem nocte dieque
spirat et in carae vivit complexibus umbrae. 95
hic igitur tibi laeta quies, fortissime divum
Alcide, nec bella vides pugnasque feroces,
sed chelyn et vittas et amantes carmina laurus.
hic tibi sollemni memorabit carmine quantus
Iliacas Geticasque domos quantusque nivalem 100
Stymphalon quantusque iugis Erymanthon aquis
terrueris, quem te pecoris possessor Hiberi,
quem tulerit saevae Mareoticus arbiter arae;
hic penetrata tibi spoliataque limina mortis
concinet et flentes Libyae Scythiaeque puellas. 105
nec te regnator Macetum nec barbarus umquam
Hannibal aut saevi posset vox horrida Syllae
his celebrare modis. certe tu, muneris auctor,

non aliis malles oculis, Lysippe, probari.

VII. ODE LYRICA AD VIBIVM MAXIMVM

Iam diu lato sociata campo
fortis heroos, Erato, labores
differ atque ingens opus in minores

 contrahe gyros,
tuque regnator lyricae cohortis 5
da novi paulum mihi iura plectri,
si tuas cantu Latio sacravi,

 Pindare, Thebas.

Maximo carmen tenuare tempto;
nunc ab intonsa capienda myrto 10
serta, nunc maior sitis et bibendus
 castior amnis.

quando te dulci Latio remittent
Dalmatae montes, ubi Dite viso
pallidus fossor redit erutoque 15
 concolor auro?

ecce me natum propiore terra
non tamen portu retinent amoeno
desides Baiae liticenve notus

 Hectoris armis. 20

torpor est nostris sine te Camenis,
tardius sueto venit ipse Thymbrae
rector et primis meus ecce metis
 haeret Achilles.

quippe te fido monitore nostra 25
Thebais multa cruciata lima
temptat audaci fide Mantuanae
 gaudia famae.

sed damus lento veniam, quod alma
prole fundasti vacuos penates. 30
o diem laetum! venit ecce nobis

 Maximus alter.

orbitas omni fugienda nisu,
quam premit votis inimicus heres,

optimo poscens (pudet heu) propinquo 35
funus amice.

orbitas nullo tumultata fletu:
stat domo capta cupidus superstes
imminens leti spoliis et ipsum
computat ignem. 40

duret in longum generosus infans,
perque non multis iter expeditum
crescat in mores patrios avumque
provocet actis!

tu tuos parvo memorabis enses, 45
quos ad Eoum tuleras Orontem
signa frenatae moderatus alae
Castore dextro;

ille ut invicti rapidum secutus
Caesaris fulmen refugis amaram 50
Sarmatis legem dederit, sub uno
vivere caelo.

sed tuas artes puer ante discat,
omne quis mundi senium remensus
orsa Sallusti brevis et Timavi 55
reddis alumnum.

VIII. GRATVLATIO AD IVLIVM MENECRATEN

Pande fores superum vittataque templa Sabaeis
nubibus et pecudum fibris spirantibus imple,
Parthenope; clari genus ecce Menecratis auget
tertia iam soboles. procerum tibi nobile vulgus
crescit et insani solatur damna Vesevi. 5
nec solum festas secreta Neapolis aras
ambiat: et socii portus dilectaque miti
terra Dicarcheo nec non plaga cara madenti
Surrentina deo sertis altaria cingat,
materni qua litus avi, quem turba nepotum 10
circumit et similes contendit reddere vultus.
gaudeat et Libyca praesignis avunculus hasta,
quaeque sibi genitos putat attollitque benigno
Polla sinu. macte, o iuvenis, qui tanta merenti
lumina das patriae. dulcis tremit ecce tumultus 15
tot dominis clamata domus. procul atra recedat
Invidia atque alio liventia pectora flectat:
his senium longaeque decus virtutis et alba
Atropos et patrius lauros promisit Apollo.

Ergo quod Ausoniae pater augustissimus urbis 20
ius tibi tergeminae dederat laetabile prolis,
omen erat. venit totiens Lucina piumque
intravit repetita larem. sic fertilis, oro,
stet domus et donis numquam mutata sacratis.
macte, quod et proles tibi saepius aucta virili 25
robore, sed iuveni laetanda et virgo parenti:
aptior his virtus, citius dabit illa nepotes,
qualis maternis Helene iam digna palaestris
inter Amyclaeos reptabat candida fratres;
vel qualis caeli facies, ubi nocte serena 30
admovere iubar mediae duo sidera lunae.

Sed queror haud faciles, iuvenum rarissime, questus
irascorque etiam, quantum irascuntur amantes.
tantane me decuit vulgari gaudia fama

noscere? cumque tibi vagiret tertius infans, 35
protinus ingenti non venit nuntia cursu
littera, quae festos cumulare altaribus ignes
et redimire chelyn postesque ornare iuberet
Albanoque cadum sordentem promere fumo
et cantu signare diem? sed tardus inersque 40
nunc demum mea vota cano: tua culpa tuusque
hic pudor. ulterius sed enim producere questus
non licet; en hilaris circumstat turba tuorum
defensatque patrem. quem non hoc agmine vincas?
di patrii, quos auguriis super aequora magnis 45
litus ad Ausonium devexit Abantia classis,
tu, ductor populi longe migrantis, Apollo,
cuius adhuc volucrem laeva cervice sedentem
respiens blande felix Eumelus adorat,
tuque, Actaea Ceres, cursu cui semper anhelus 50
votivam taciti quassamus lampada mystae,
et vos, Tyndaridae, quos non horrenda Lycurgi
Taygeta umbrosaeque magis coluere Therapnae:
hos cum plebe sua patrii servate penates.
sint, qui fessam aevo crebrisque laboribus urbem 55
voce opibusque iuvent viridique in nomine servant.
his placidos genitor mores largumque nitorem
monstret avus, pulchrae studium virtutis uterque.
quippe et opes et origo sinunt hanc lampade prima
patricias intrare fores, hos pube sub ipsa, 60
si modo prona bonis invicti Caesaris adsint
numina, Romulei limen pulsare senatus.

IX. HENDECASYLLABI IOCOSI AD PLOTIVM GRYPVM

Est sane iocus iste, quod libellum
misisti mihi, Grype, pro libello.
urbanum tamen hoc potest videri,
si post hoc aliquid mihi remittas;
nam si ludere, Grype, perseveras, 5
non ludis. licet, ecce, computemus!
noster purpureus novusque charta
et binis decoratus umbilicis,
praeter me mihi constitit decussis:
tu rosum tineis situque putrem, 10
quales aut Libycis madent olivis
aut tus Niliacum piperve servant
aut Byzantiacos colunt lacertos;
nec saltem tua dicta continentem
quae trino iuvenis foro tonabas, 15
aut centum prope iudices, priusquam
te Germanicus arbitrum sequenti
annonae dedit omniumque late
praefecit stationibus viarum;
sed Bruti senis oscitationes 20
de capsula miseri libellionis,
emptum plus minus asse Gaiano,
donas. usque adeone defuerunt
caesis pillea suta de lacernis
vel mantelia luridaeve mappae, 25
chartae Thebaicaeve Caricaeve?
nusquam turbine conditus ruenti
prunorum globus atque cottanorum?
non enlychnia sicca, non replictae
bulborum tunicae? nec ova tantum, 30
nec lenes halicae, nec asperum far?
nusquam Cinyphiis vagata campis
curvarum domus uda coclearum?

non lardum grave debilisve perna?
non Lucanica, non graves Falisci, 35
non sal oxyporumve caseusve?
aut panes nitidantis aphronitri?
vel passum psithiis suis recoctum,
dulci defruta vel lutosa caeno?
quantum nec dare cereos olentes, 40
cultellum tenuesve codicillos?
ollares, rogo, non licebat uvas,
Cumano patinas in orbe tortas
aut unam dare synthesin (quid horres?)
alborum calicum atque caccaborum? 45
sed certa velut aequus in statera,
nil mutas, sed idem mihi rependis.
quid si cum bene mane semicrudus
inlatam tibi dixero salutem,
et tu me vicibus domi salutes? 50
aut cum me dape iuveris opima,
exspectes similes et ipse cenas?
irascor tibi, Grype. sed valebis;
tantum ne mihi, quo soles lepore,
et nunc hendecasyllabos remittas.

Liber Quintus

STATIVS ABASCANTO SVO SALVTEM

Omnibus affectibus prosequenda sunt bona exempla, cum publice prosint. pietas, quam Priscillae tuae praestas, et morum tuorum pars, et nulli non conciliare te, praecipue marito, potest. uxorem enim vivam amare voluptas est, defunctam religio. ego tamen huic operi non ut unus e turba nec tantum quasi officiosus adsilui. amavit enim uxorem meam Priscilla et amando fecit mihi illam probatiorem; post hoc ingratus sum, si lacrimas tuas transeo. praeterea latus omne divinae domus semper demereri pro mea mediocritate conitor. nam qui bona fide deos colit, amat et sacerdotes. sed quamvis propiorem usum amicitiae tuae iampridem cuperem, mallet tamen nondum invenisse materiam.

I. EPICEDION IN PRISCILLAM

Si manus aut similes docilis mihi fingere ceras
aut ebur impressis aurumve animare figuris,
hinc, Priscilla, tuo solacia grata marito
conciperem. namque egregia pietate meretur
ut vel Apelleo vultus signata colore, 5
Phidiaca vel nata manu reddare dolenti.
sic auferre rogis umbram conatur, et ingens
certamen cum Morte gerit, curasque fatigat
artificum inque omni te quaerit amare metallo.
sed mortalis honos, agilis quem dextra laborat. 10
nos tibi, laudati iuvenis rarissima coniunx,
longa nec obscurum finem latura perenni
temptamus dare iusta lyra, modo dexter Apollo
quique venit iuncto mihi semper Apolline Caesar
annuat: haut alio melius condere sepulcro. 15

Sera quidem tanto struitur medicina dolori,
altera cum volucris Phoebi rota torqueat annum;
sed cum plaga recens et adhuc in vulnere primo
nigra domus questu, miseram qua accessus ad aurem
coniugis orbat? tunc flere et scindere vestes 20
et famulos lassare greges et vincere planctus
Fataque et iniustos rabidis pulsare querelis
caelicolas solamen erat. licet ipse levandos
ad gemitus silvis comitatus et amnibus Orpheus
afforet atque omnis pariter matertera vatem, 25
omnis Apollineus tegeret Bacchique sacerdos:
nil cantus, nil fila deis pallentis Averno
Eumenidumque audita comis mulcere valerent:
tantus in attonito regnabat pectore luctus.
nunc etiam ad planctus refugit iam plana cicatrix 30
dum canimus, gravibusque oculis uxorius instat
imber. habentne pios etiamnum haec lumina fletus?
mira fides! citius genetrix Sipylea feretur
exhausisse genas, citius Tithonida maesti

deficient rores aut exsatiata fatiscet 35
mater Achilleis hiemes adfrangere bustis.
macte animi! notat ista deus qui flectit habenas
orbis et humanos propior Iove digerit actus,
maerentemque videt; lectique arcana ministri
hinc etiam documenta capit, quod diligis umbram 40
et colis exsequias. hic est castissimus ardor,
hic amor a domino meritis censore probari.

Nec mirum, si vos collato pectore mixtos
iunxit inabrupta concordia longa catena.
illa quidem nuptumque prior taedasque marito 45
passa alio, sed te ceu virginitate iugatum
visceribus totis animaque amplexa fovebat;
qualiter aequaevo sociatam palmitē vitem
ulmus amat miscetque nemus ditemque precatur
autumnū et caris gaudet redimita racemis. 50
laudantur proavis seu pulchrae munere formae,
quae morum caruere bonis falsaeque potentes
laudis egent verae: tibi quamquam et origo niteret
et felix species multumque optanda maritis,
ex te maior honos, unum novisse cubile, 55
unum secretis agitare sub ossibus ignem.
illum nec Phrygius vitiasset raptor amorem
Dulichii proci nec qui fraternus adulter
casta Mycenaeano conubia polluit auro.
si Babylonos opes, Lydae si pondera gazae 60
Indorumque dares Serumque Arabumque potentes
divitias, mallet cum paupertate pudica
intemerata mori vitamque rependere famae.
nec frons triste rigens nimiusque in moribus horror,
sed simplex hilarisque fides et mixta pudori 65
gratia. quod si anceps metus ad maiora vocasset,
illa vel armiferas pro coniuge laeta catervas
fulmineosque ignes mediique pericula ponti
exciperet. melius, quod non adversa probarunt
quae tibi cura tori, quantus pro coniuge pallor. 70
sed meliore via dextros tua vota marito

promeruere deos, dum nocte dieque fatigas
numina, dum cunctis supplex advolveris aris
et mitem genium domini praesentis adoras.

Audita es, venitque gradu Fortuna benigno. 75
vidit quippe pii iuvenis navamque quietem
intactamque fidem succinctaque pectora curis
et vigiles sensus et digna evolvere tantas
sobria corda vices, vidit, qui cuncta suorum
novit et inspectis ambit latus omne ministris. 80
nec mirum: videt ille ortus obitusque, quid auster,
quid boreas hibernus agat, ferrique togaeque
consilia atque ipsam mentem probat. ille iubatis
molem immensam umeris et vix tractabile pensum
imposuit (nec enim numerosior altera sacra 85
cura domo), magnum late dimittere in orbem
Romulei mandata ducis, viresque modosque
imperii tractare manu; quae laurus ab arcto,
quid vagus Euphrates, quid ripa binominis Histri,
quid Rheni vexilla ferant: quantum ultimus orbis 90
cesserit et refugo circumsona gurgite Thyle;
(omnia nam laetas pila attollentia frondes,
nullaque famosa signatur lancea penna);
praeterea, fidos dominus si dividat enses,
pandere quis centum valeat frenare, maniplos 95
inter missus eques, quis praecepisse cohorti,
quem deceat clari praestantior ordo tribuni,
quisnam frenigeræ signum dare dignior alae;
mille etiam praeosse vices, an merserit agros
Nilus, an imbrifero Libye sudaverit austro: 100
cunctaque si numerem, non plura interprete virga
nuntiat ex celsis ales Tegeaticus astris,
quaeque cadit liquidas Iunonia virgo per auras
et picturato pluvium ligat aera gyro,
quaeque tuas laurus volucris, Germanice, cursu 105
Fama vehit praegressa diem tardumque sub astris
Arcada et in medio linquit Thaumantida caelo.

Qualem te superi, Priscilla, hominesque benigno

aspexere die, cum primum ingentibus actis
admotus coniunx! vicisti gaudia ~cene 110
ipsius, effuso dum pectore prona sacratos
ante pedes avide domini tam magna merentis
volueris. Aonio non sic in vertice gaudet,
quam pater arcani praefecit hiatibus antri
Deliuss, aut primi cui ius venerabile thyrsi 115
Bacchus et attonitae tribuit vexilla catervae.
nec tamen hic mutata quies probitasve secundis
intumuit: tenor idem animo moresque modesti
fortuna crescente manent. fovet anxia curas
coniugis hortaturque simul flectitque labores. 120
ipsa dapes modicas et sobria pocula tradit,
exemplumque ad erile monet; velut Apula coniunx
agricolae parci vel sole infecta Sabino,
quae videt emeriti iam prospectantibus astris
tempus adesse viri, propere mensasque torosque 125
instruit expectatque sonum redeuntis aratri.
parva loquor. tecum gelidas comes illa per arctos
Sarmaticasque hiemes Histrumque et pallida Rheni
frigora, tecum omnes animo durata per aestus
et, si castra darent, vellet gestare pharetras, 130
vellet Amazonia latus intercludere pelta;
dum te pulverea bellorum nube videret
Caesarei prope fulmen equi divinaque tela
vibrantem et magnae sparsum sudoribus hastae.

Hactenus alma chelys. tempus nunc ponere frondes, 135
Phoebe, tuas maestaque comam damnare cupresso.

Quisnam pacata consanguinitate ligavit
Fortunam Invidiamque deus? quis iussit iniquas
aeternum bellare deas? nullamne notavit
illa domum, torvo quam non haec lumine figat 140
protinus et saeva proturbet gaudia dextra?
florebant hilares inconcussique penates:
nil maestum. quid enim, quamvis infida levisque,
Caesare tam dextro posset Fortuna timeri?
invenere viam liventia Fata, piumque 145

intravit vis saeva larem. sic plena maligno
adflantur vineta noto, sic alta senescit
imbres seges nimio, rapidae sic obvia puppi
invidet et velis adnubilat aura secundis.
carpitur eximium fato Priscilla decorem; 150
qualiter alta comam silvarum gloria pinus
seu Iovis igne malo seu iam radice soluta
deficit et nulli spoliata remurmurat aerae.
quid probitas aut casta fides, quid numina prosunt
culti deum? furvae miseram circum undique leti 155
vallavere plagae, tenduntur dura sororum
lilia et exacti superest pars ultima fili.
nil famuli coetus, nil ars operosa medentum
auxiliata malis; comites tamen undique ficto
spem simulant vultu, flentem notat illa maritum. 160
ille modo infernae nequiquam flumina Lethes
incorrupta rogat, nunc anxius omnibus aris
inlacrimat signatque fores et pectore terget
limina; nunc magni vocat exorabile numen
Caesaris. heu durus fati tenor! estne quod illi 165
non liceat? quantae poterant mortalibus annis
accessisse morae si tu, pater, omne teneres
arbitrium? caeco gemeret Mors clusa barathro
longius, et vacuae posuissent stamina Parcae.

Iamque cadunt vultus oculisque novissimus error 170
optunaeque aures, nisi cum vox sola mariti
noscitur; illum unum media de morte reversa
mens videt, illum aegris circumdat fortiter ulnis
immotas obversa genas, nec sole supremo
lumina sed dulci mavult satiare marito. 175
tum sic unanimum moriens solatur amantem:
‘pars animae victura meae, cui linquere possim
o utinam, quos dura mihi rapit Atropos annos:
parce precor lacrimis, saevo ne concute planctu
pectora, nec crucia fugientem coniugis umbram. 180
linquo equidem thalamos, salvo tamen ordine, maestos
quod prior: exegi longa potiora senecta

tempora. vidi omni pridem te flore nitentem,
vidi altae propius propiusque accedere dextrae.
non in te Fatis, non iam caelestibus ullis 185
arbitrium: mecum ista fero. tu limite coepto
tende libens sacrumque latus geniumque potentem
inquietus ama. nunc, quod cupis ipse iuberi,
da Capitolinis aeternum sedibus aurum,
quo niteat sacri centeno pondere vultus 190
Caesaris et propriae signet cultriciis amorem.
sic ego nec Furias nec deteriora videbo
Tartara et Elysias felix admittar in oras.'

Haec dicit labens sociosque amplectitur artus
haerentemque animam non tristis in ora mariti 195
transtulit et cara pressit sua lumina dextra.

At iuvenis magno flammatus pectora luctu
nunc implet saevo viduos clamore penates,
nunc ferrum laxare cupit, nunc ardua tendit
in loca (vix retinent comites), nunc ore ligato 200
incubat amissae mersumque in corde dolorem
saevus agit, qualis conspecta coniuge segnis
Odrysius vates positus ad Strymona plectris
obstupuit tristemque rogum sine carmine flevit.
ille etiam erecte rupisset tempora vitae, 205
ne tu Tartareum chaos incommitata subires,
set prohibet mens fida ducis mirandaque sacris
imperiis et maior amor.

Quis carmine digno
exsequias et dona malae feralia pompae
perlegat? omne illic stipatum examine longo 210
ver Arabum Cilicumque fluit floresque Sabaei
Indorumque arsura seges praereptaque templis
tura, Palaestini simul Hebraeique liquores
Coryciaeque comae Cinyreaque germina; et altis
ipsa toris Serum Tyrioque umbrata recumbit 215
tegmine. sed toto spectatur in agmine coniunx
solus; in hunc magnae flectuntur lumina Romae
ceu iuvenes natos suprema ad busta ferentem:

is dolor in vultu, tantum crinesque genaeque
noctis habent. illam tranquillo fine solutam 220
felicemque vocant; lacrimas fudere marito.

Est locus ante urbem qua primum nascitur ingens
Appia, quaque Italo gemitus Almone Cybebe
ponit et Idaeos iam non reminiscitur amnis.
hic te Sidonio velatam molliter ostro 225
eximius coniunx (nec enim fumantia busta
clamoremque rogi potuit perferre) beato
composuit, Priscilla, toro. nil longior aetas
carpere, nil aevi poterunt vitiare labores:
sic cautum membris; tantas venerabile marmor 230
spirat opes. mox in varias mutata novaris
effigies: hoc aere Ceres, hoc lucida Gnosis,
illo Maia tholo, Venus hoc non improba saxo.
accipiunt vultus haud indignata decoros
numina: circumstant famuli consuetaque turba 235
obsequiis, tunc rite tori mensaeque parantur
assiduae. domus ista, domus! quis triste sepulcrum
dixerit? hac merito visa pietate mariti
protinus exclames: 'est hic, agnosco, minister
illius, aeternae modo qui sacraria genti 240
condidit inque alio posuit sua sidera caelo.'
sic, ubi magna novum Phario de litore puppis
solvit iter iamque innumeros utrimque rudentes
lataque veliferi porrexit brachia mali
invasitque vias, in eodem angusta phaselos 245
aequore et immensi partem sibi vindicat austru.

Quid nunc immodicos, iuvenum lectissime, fletus
corde foves longumque vetas exire dolorem?
nempe times ne Cerbereos Priscilla tremescat
latratus? tacet ille piis; ne tardior adsit 250
navita proturbetque vadis? vehit ille merentes
protinus et manes placidus locat hospite cumba.
praeterea, si quando pio laudata marito
umbra venit, iubet ire faces Prosperina laetas
egressasque sacris veteres heroidas antris 255

lumine purpureo tristes laxare tenebras
sertaque et Elysios animae praesternere flores.
sic manes Priscilla subit; ibi supplice dextra
pro te Fata rogat, reges tibi tristis Avernī
placat, ut expletis humani finibus aevi 260
pacantem terras dominum iuvenemque relinquo
ipse senex. certae iurant in vota sorores.

II. LAVDES CRISPINI VETTI BOLANI FILII

Rura meus Tyrrhena petit saltusque Tagetis
Crispinus; nec longa mora est aut avia tellus;
et mea secreto velluntur pectora morsu,
udaque turgentes impellunt lumina guttas,
ceu super Aegaeas hiemes abeuntis amici 5
vela sequar spectemque ratem iam fessus ab altis
rupibus atque oculos longo querar aere vinci.

Quid? si militiae iam te, puer inclite, primae
clara rudimenta et castrorum dulce vocaret
auspicium, quanto manarent gaudia fletu 10
quosve darem amplexus! etiamne optanda propinqui
tristia, ut octonos bis iam tibi circuit orbes
vita? sed angustis animus robustior annis
succumbitque oneri, et mentem sua non capit aetas.
nec mirum: non te series inhonora parentum 15
obscurum proavis et priscae lucis egentem
plebeia de stirpe tulit; non sanguine cretus
turmali trabeaque recens et paupere clavo
augustam sedem et Latii penetrale senatus
advena pulsasti, sed praecedente tuorum 20
agmine. Romulei qualis per iugera circi
cum pulcher visu titulis generosus avitis
exspectatur equus cuius de stemmate longo
felix demeritos habet admissura parentes,
illum omnes acuunt plausus, illum ipse volentem 25
pulvis et incurvae gaudent agnoscere metae:
sic te, clare puer, genitum sibi curia sensit,
primaque patricia clausit vestigia luna.
mox Tyrios ex more sinus tunicamque potentem
agnovere umeri. sed enim tibi magna parabat 30
ad titulos exempla pater. quippe ille iuventam
protinus ingrediens pharetratum invasit Araxen
belliger indocilemque fero servire Neroni
Armeniam. rigidi summam Mavortis agebat

Corbulo, sed comitem belli sociumque laborum 35
ille quoque egregiis multum miratus in armis
Bolanium; atque illi curarum asperrima suetus
credere partirique metus, quod tempus amicum
fraudibus, exerto quaenam bona tempora bello,
quae suspecta fides aut quae fuga vera ferocis 40
Armenii. Bolanus iter praenosse timendum,
Bolanus tutis iuga quaerere commoda castris,
metiri Bolanus agros, aperire malignas
torrentum nemorumque moras tantamque verendi
mentem implere ducis iussisque ingentibus unus 45
sufficere. ipsa virum norat iam barbara tellus,
ille secundus apex bellorum et proxima cassis.
sic Phryges attoniti, quamquam Nemeaea viderent
arma Cleonaeusque acies impelleret arcus,
pugnante Alcide tamen et Telamona timebant. 50
disce, puer, (nec enim externo monitore petendus
virtutis tibi pulcher amor: cognata ministret
laus animos. aliis Decii reducesque Camilli
monstrentur), tu disce patrem, quantusque negantem
fluctibus occiduis fesso usque Hyperione Thylen 55
intrarit mandata gerens quantusque potentis
mille urbes Asiae sortito rexit anno,
imperium mulcente toga. bibe talia pronis
auribus, haec certent tibi conciliare propinqui,
haec iterent comites praecepta senesque paterni. 60

Iamque alio moliris iter nec deside passu
ire paras. nondum validae tibi signa iuventae
inrepsere genis, et adhuc tenor integer aevi.
nec genitor iuxta; fatis namque haustus iniquis
occidit et geminam prolem sine praeside linquens; 65
nec saltem teneris ostrum puerile lacertis
exuit albentique umeros induxit amictu.
quem non corruptit pubes effrena novaeque
libertas properata togae? ceu nescia falcis
silva comas tollit fructumque exspirat in umbras. 70
at tibi Pieriae tenero sub pectore curae

et pudor et docti legem sibi dicere mores;
tunc hilaris probitas et frons tranquilla, nitorque
luxuriae confine tenens, pietasque per omnes
dispensata modos; aequaevo cedere fratri 75
mirarique patrem miseraeque ignoscere matri
admonuit fortuna domus. tibine illa nefanda
pocula letalesque manu componere sucos
evaluit, qui voce potes praevertere morsus
serpentum atque omnis vultu placare novercas? 80
infestare libet manes meritoque precatu
pacem auferre rogis; sed te, puer optime, cerno
flectentem iustis et talia dicta parantem:
'parce precor cineri: fatum illud et ira nocentum
Parcarum crimenque dei, mortalia quisquis 85
pectora sero videt nec primo in limine sistit
conatus scelerum atque animos infanda parantes.
excidat illa dies aevo nec postera credant
saecula. nos certe taceamus et obruta multa
nocte tegi propriae patiamur crimina gentis. 90
exegit poenas, hominum cui cura suorum,
quo Pietas auctore redit terrasque revisit,
quem timet omne nefas. satis haec lacrimandaque nobis
ultio. quin saevas utinam exorare liceret
Eumenidas timidaeque avertere Cerberon umbrae 95
immemoremque tuis citius dare manibus amnem.'

Macte animo, iuvenis! sed crescunt crimina matris.
nec tantum pietas, sed protinus ardua virtus
affectata tibi. nuper cum forte sodalis
immeritae falso palleret crimine famae 100
erigeretque forum succinctaque iudice multo
surgeret et castum vibraret Iulia fulmen,
tu, quamquam non ante forum legesque severas
passus sed tacita studiorum occultus in umbra,
defensare metus adversaque tela subisti 105
pellere, inermis adhuc et tiro, paventis amici.
haud umquam tales aspexit Romulus annos
Dardaniusque senex medii bellare togata

strage fori. stupuere patres temptamina tanta
conatusque tuos, nec te reus ipse timebat. 110
par vigor et membris, promptaeque ad fortia vires
sufficiunt animo atque ingentia iussa sequuntur.
ipse ego te nuper Tiberino in litore vidi
qua Tyrrhena vadis Laurentibus aestuat unda,
tendentem cursus vexantemque ilia nuda 115
calce ferocis equi, vultu dextraque minacem:
si qua fides dictis, stupui armatumque putavi.
Gaetulo sic pulcher equo Troianaque quassans
tela novercales ibat venator in agros
Ascanius miseramque patri flagrabat Elissam; 120
Troilus haut aliter gyro leviole minantes
eludebat equos, aut quem de turribus altis
Arcadas Ogygio versantem in pulvere metas
spectabant Tyriae non torvo lumine matres.
ergo age (nam magni ducis indulgentia pulsat 125
certaque dat votis hilaris vestigia frater),
surge animo, et fortes castrorum concipe curas.
monstrabunt acies Mavors Actaeaque virgo,
flectere Castor equos, umeris quater arma Quirinus,
qui tibi iam tenero permisit plaudere collo 130
nubigenas clipeos intactaque caedibus arma.
Quasnam igitur terras, quem Caesaris ibis in orbem?
Arctoosne amnes et Rheni fracta natabis
flumina, an aestiferis Libyae sudabis in arvis?
an iuga Pannoniae mutatoresque domorum 135
Sauromatas quaties? an te septenus habebit
Hister et umbroso circumflua coniuge Peuce?
an Solymum cinerem palmetaque capta subibis
non sibi felices silvas ponentis Idymes?
quod si te magno tellus frenata parenti 140
accipiat, quantum ferus exsultabit Araxes,
quanta Caledonios attollet gloria campos,
cum tibi longaevus referet trucis incola terrae:
'hic suetus dare iura parens, hoc cespite turmas
adfari; vicis speculas castellaque++longe 145

aspicis?++ille dedit cinxitque haec moenia fossa;
belligeris haec dona deis, haec tela dicavit
(cernis adhuc titulos); hunc ipse vocantibus armis
induit, hunc regi rapuit thoraca Britanno,
qualiter in Teucros victricia bella paranti 150
ignotum Pyrrho Phoenix narrabat Achillem.

Felix qui viridi fidens, Optate, iuventa
durabis quascumque vias vallumque subibis,
forsan et ipse latus (sic numina principis adsint)
cinctus et unanimi comes indefessus amici, 155
quo Pylades ex more pius, quo Dardana gessit
bella Menoetiades. quippe haec concordia vobis,
hic amor est; duretque, precor! nos fortior aetas
iam fugit; hinc votis animum precibusque iuvabo,
et mihi. sed questus solitos si forte ciebo 160
et mea Romulei venient ad carmina patres,
tu deeris, Crispine, mihi, cuneosque per omnes
te meus absentem circumspectabit Achilles.
sed venies melior (vatum non irrita currunt
omina); quique aquilas tibi nunc et castra recludit, 165
idem omnes perferre gradus cingique superbis
fascibus et patrias dabit insedis curules.

Sed quis ab excelsis Troianae collibus Albae,
unde suae iuxta prospectat moenia Romae
proximus ille deus, fama velocior intrat 170
nuntius atque tuos implet, Crispine, penates?
dicebam certe: vatum non irrita currunt
auguria. en, ingens reserat tibi limen honorum
Caesar et Ausonii committit munia ferri.
vade, puer, tantisque enixus suffice donis, 175
felix qui magno iam nunc sub praeside iuras
cuique sacer primum tradit Germanicus ense!
non minus hoc, fortis quam si tibi panderet ipse
Bellipotens aquilas torvaque induceret ora
casside. vade alacer maioraque disce mereri!

III. EPICEDION IN PATREM SVVM

Ipse malas vires et lamentabile carmen
Elysio de fonte mihi pulsumque sinistrae
da, genitor praedocte, lyrae. neque enim antra moveri
Delia nec solitam fas est impellere Cirrham
te sine. Corycia quicquid modo Phoebus in umbra, 5
quicquid ab Ismariis monstrarat collibus Euhan,
dedidici. fugere meos Parnasia crines
vellera, funestamque hederis inrepere taxum
extimui trepidamque (nefas!) arescere laurum.
certe ego, magnanimum qui facta attollere regum 10
ibam altum spirans Martemque aequare canendo.
quis sterili mea corda situ, quis Apolline merso
frigida damnatae praeduxit nubila menti?
stant circum attonitae vatem et nil dulce sonantem
nec digitis nec voce, deae. dux ipsa silenti 15
fulta caput cithara, qualis post Orphea raptum
astitit, Hebre, tibi cernens iam surda ferarum
agmina et immotos sublato carmine lucos.

At tu, seu membris emissus in ardua tendens
fulgentisque plagas rerumque elementa recenses, 20
quis deus, unde ignes, quae ducat semita solem,
quae minuat Phoeben quaeque integrare latentem
causa queat, notique modos extendis Arati;
seu tu Lethaei secreto in gramine campi
concilia heroum iuxta manesque beatos, 25
Maeonium Ascraeumque senem non segnior umbra
accolis alternumque sonas et carmina misces:
da vocem magno, pater, ingeniumque dolori.
nam me ter relegens caelo terque ora retexens
luna videt residem nullaue Heliconide tristes 30
solantem curas: tuus ut mihi vultibus ignis
inrubuit cineremque oculis umentibus hausit,
vilis honos studiis. vix haec in munera solvo
primum animum tacitisque situm depellere curis

nunc etiam labente manu nec lumine sicco 35
ordior adclinis tumulo quo molle quiescis
iugera nostra tenens, ubi post Aeneia fata
stellatus Latiis ingessit montibus Albam
Ascanius, Phrygio dum pingues sanguine campos
odit et infaustae regnum dotale novercae. 40
hic ego te (nam Sicanii non mitius halat
aura croci; dites nec si tibi rara Sabaei
cinnama, odoratas nec Arabs decerpsit aristas
infernī cum laude laci) sed carmine plango
Pierio; sume et gemitus et vulnera nati 45
et lacrimas, rari quas umquam habuere parentes.
atque utinam fortuna mihi dare manibus aras,
par templis opus, aeriamque educere molem,
Cyclopus scopulos ultra atque audacia saxa
Pyramidum, et magno tumulum praetexere luco! 50
illic et Siculi superassem dona sepulcri
et Nemees lucum et Pelopis sollemnia trunci.
illic Oebalio non finderet aera disco
Graiorum vis nuda virum, non arva rigaret
sudor equum aut putri sonitum daret ungula fossa; 55
sed Phoebi simplex chorus, et frondentia vatum
praemia laudato, genitor, tibi rite ligarem.
ipse madens oculis, umbrarum animaeque sacerdos,
praecinerem gemitum, cui te nec Cerberus omni
ore nec Orpheae quirent avertere leges. 60
atque tibi moresque tuos et facta canentem
fors et magniloquo non posthabuisset Homero,
tenderet et torvo pietas aequare Maroni.

Cur magis incessat superos et aena sororum
stamina, quae tepido genetrix super aggere nati 65
orba sedet, vel quae primaevi coniugis ignem
aspicit obstantesque manus turbamque tenentem
vincit in ardentem, liceat, moritura maritum?
maior ab his forsā superos et Tartara pulsem
invidia, externis etiam miserabile visu 70
funus eat; sed nec modo se Natura dolenti

nec Pietas iniusta dedit: mihi limine primo
fatorum et viridi, genitor, ceu raptus ab aevo
Tartara dura subis. nec enim Marathonias virgo
parcius extinctum saevorum crimine agrestum 75
fleverit Icarium, Phrygia quam turre cadentem
Astyanacta parens. laqueo quin illa supremo
inclusit gemitus: at te post funera magni
Hectoris Haemonio pudor est servisse marito.

Non ego, quas fati certus sibi morte canora 80
inferias praemittit olor nec rupe quod atra
Tyrrenae volucres nautis praedulce minantur,
in patrios adhibebo rogos; non murmure trunco
quod gemit et durae queritur Philomela sorori:
nota nimis vati. quis non in funere cunctos 85
Heliadum ramos lacrimosaque germina dixit
et Phrygium silicem, atque ausum contraria Phoebos
carmina nec fida gavisam Pallada buxo?
te Pietas oblita virum revocataque caelo
Iustitia et gemina plangat Facundia lingua 90
et Pallas doctique cohors Heliconia Phoebi,
quis labor Aonios seno pede ducere campos
et quibus Arcadia carmen testudine mensis
~cydalibem~ nomenque fuit, quosque orbe sub omni
ardua septena numerat Sapientia fama, 95
qui furias regumque domos aversaque caelo
sidera terrifico super intonare cothurno,
et quis lasciva vires tenuare Thalia
dulce vel heroos gressu truncare tenores.
omnia namque animo complexus et omnibus auctor, 100
qua fandi vis lata patet, sive orsa libebat
Aoniis vincere modis seu voce soluta
spargere et effreno nimbos aequare profatu.

Exsere semirutos subito de pulvere vultus,
Parthenope, crinemque adflato monte sepultum 105
pone super tumulos et magni funus alumni,
quo non Monychiae quicquam praestantius arces
doctaque Cyrene Spartheve animosa creavit.

si tu stirpe vacans famaeque obscura iaceres
 nil gentile tenens, illo te cive probabas 110
 Graiam atque Euboico maiorum sanguine duci.
 illa tuis totiens praestant se tempora sertis
 cum stata laudato caneret quinquennia versu
 ora supergressus regis Pylīi oraque regis
 Dulichii speciemque, comam subnexus utroque. 115
 non tibi deformes obscuri sanguinis ortus
 nec sine luce genus, quamquam fortuna parentum
 artior expensis. etenim te divite ritu
 ponere purpureos Infantia legit amictus
 stirpis honore datos et nobile pectoris aurum. 120
 protinus exorto dextrum risere sorores
 Aonides, puerique chelyn summisit et ora
 imbuit amne sacro iam tum mihi blandus Apollo.
 nec simplex patriae decus, et natalis origo
 pendet ab ambiguo geminae certamine terrae. 125
 te de gente suum Latiis ascita colonis
 Graia refert Hyele, ~graius~ qua puppe magister
 excidit et mediis miser evigilavit in undis;
 maior at inde suum longo probat ordine vitae
 <Parthenope> * * * 129a
 Maeoniden aliaeque aliis natalibus urbes
 diripiunt cunctaeque probant; non omnibus ille
 verus, alit victos immanis gloria falsi.
 atque ibi dum profers annos vitamque salutas,
 protinus ad patrii raperis certamina lustrī
 vix implenda viris, laudum festinus et audax 135
 ingenii. stupuit primaeva ad carmina plebes
 Euboea et natis te monstravere parentes.
 inde frequens pugnae nulloque ingloria sacro
 vox tua: non totiens victorem Castora gyro
 nec fratrem caestu virides clausere Therapnae. 140
 sin prunum vicisse domi, quid Achaea mereri
 praemia nunc ramis Phoebi nunc gramine Lerna
 nunc Athamantea protectum tempora pinu,
 cum totiens lassata tamen nusquam avia frondes

abstulit aut alium tetigit Victoria crinem? 145

Hinc tibi vota patrum credi generosaque pubes
te monitore regi, mores et facta priorum
discere, quis casus Troiae, quam tardus Vlixes,
quantus equum pugnasque virum decurrere versu
Maeonides quantumque pios ditarit agrestes 150
Ascraeus Siculusque senex, qua lege recurat
Pindaricae vox flexa lyrae volucrumque precator
Ibycus et tetricis Alcman cantatus Amyclis
Stesichorusque ferox saltusque ingressa viriles
non formidata temeraria Chalcide Sappho, 155
quosque alios dignata chelys. tu pandere doctus
carmina Battiadae latebrasque Lycophronis atri
Sophronaque implicitum tenuisque arcana Corinnae.
sed quid parva loquor? tu par assuetus Homero
ferre iugum senosque pedes aequare solutis 160
versibus et numquam passu brevior relinqui.
quid mirum, patria si te petiere relictas
quos Lucanus ager, rigidi quos iugera Dauni,
quos Veneri plorata domus neglectaque tellus
Alcidae, vel quos e vertice Surrentino 165
mittit Tyrrheni speculatrix virgo profundi,
quos propiore sinu lituo remoque notatus
collis et Ausonii pridem laris hospita Cyme,
quosque Dicarchei portus Baianaque mittunt
litora, qua mediis alte permissus anhelat 170
ignis aquis et operta domos incendia servant?
sic ad Avernales scopulos et opaca Sibyllae
antra rogaturae veniebant undique gentes;
illa minas divum Parcarumque acta canebat
quamvis decepto vates non irrita Phoebo. 175
mox et Romuleam stirpem procuresque futuros
instruis inque patrum vestigia ducere perstas.
sub te Dardanius facis explorator opertae,
qui Diomedei celat penetralia furti,
crevit et inde sacrum didicit puer; arma probatis 180
monstrasti Saliis praesagumque aethera certis

auguribus; cui Chalcidicum fas volvere carmen,
cur Phrygii lateat coma flaminis, et tua multum
verbera succincti formidavere Luperci.

Et nunc ex illo forsán grege gentibus alter 185
iura dat Eois, alter compescit Hiberas,
alter Achaemenium secludit Zeumate Persen,
hi dites Asiae populos, hi Pontica frenant,
hi fora pacificis emendant fascibus, illi
castra pia statione tenent: tu laudis origo. 190
non tibi certassent iuvenilia fingere corda
Nestor et indomiti Phoenix moderator alumni,
quique tubas acres lituosque audire volentem
Aeaciden alio frangebat carmine Chiron.

Talia dum celebras, subitam civilis Erinys 195
Tarpeio de monte facem Phlegraeaeque movit
proelia. sacrilegis lucent Capitolia taedis,
et Senonum furias Latiae sumpsere cohortes.
vix requies flammae necdum rogos ille deorum
siderat, excisis cum tu solacia templis 200
impiger et multum facibus velocior ipsis
concinis ore pio captivaeque fulmina defles.
mirantur Latii proceres ultorque deorum
Caesar, et e medio divum pater annuit igni.
iamque et flere pio Vesuvina incendia cantu 205
mens erat et gemitum patriis impendere damnis,
cum pater exemptum terris ad sidera montem
sustulit et late miseris deiecit in urbes.

Me quoque vocales lucos Boeotaeque tempe
pulsantem, cum stirpe tua descendere dixi, 210
admisere deae; nec enim mihi sidera tantum
aequoraeque et terras, quae mos debere parenti,
sed decus hoc quodcumque lyrae primusque dedisti
non vulgare loqui et famam sperare sepulcro.
qualis eras, Latios quotiens ego carmine patres 215
mulcerem felixque tui spectator adesses
muneris! heu quali confusus gaudia fletu
vota piosque metus inter laetumque pudorem!

quam tuus ille dies, quam non mihi gloria maior!
talis Olympiaca iuvenem cum spectat harena 220
qui genuit, plus ipse ferit, plus corde sub alto
caeditur; attendunt cunei, spectatur Achaeis
ille magis, crebro dum lumina pulveris haustu
obruit et presa vovet exspirare corona.
ei mihi quod tantum patrias ego vertice frondes 225
solaque Chalcidicae Cerealiam dona coronae
te sub teste tuli! qualem te Dardanus Albae
vix cepisset ager, si per me certa tulisses
Caesarea donata manu! quod subdere robur
illa dies, quantum potuit dempsisse senectae! 230
nam quod me mixta quercus non pressit oliva
et fugit speratus honos, quam dulce parentis
invida Tarpei caperes! te nostra magistro
Thebais urgebat priscorum exordia vatum;
tu cantus stimulare meos, tu pandere facta 235
heroum bellicae modos positusque locorum
monstrabas. labat incerto mihi limite cursus
te sine, et orbatae caligant vela carinae.
nec solum larga memet pietate fovebas:
talis et in thalamos. una tibi cognita taeda 240
conubia, unus amor. certe seiungere matrem
iam gelidis nequeo bustis; te sentit habetque,
te videt et tumulos ortuque obituque salutat,
ut Pharios aliae ficta pietate dolores
Mygdoniosque colunt et non sua funera plorant. 245

Quid referam expositos servato pondere mores?
quae pietas, quam vile lucrum, quae cura pudoris,
quantus amor recti! rursusque, ubi dulce remitti,
gratia quae dictis! animo quam nulla senectus!
his tibi pro meritis famam laudesque benignas 250
iudex cura deum, nulloque e vulnere tristem
concessit. raperis, genitor, non indigus aevi,
non nimius, trinisque decem quinquennia lustris
iuncta ferens. sed me pietas numerare dolorque
non sinit, o Pylias aevi transcendere metas 255

et Teucros aequare senes, o digne videre
me similem! sed nec leti tibi ianua tristis:
quippe leves causae, nec segnis labe senili
exitus instanti praemisit membra sepulcro,
sed te torpor iners et mors imitata quietem 260
explicuit falsoque tulit sub Tartara somno.

Quos ego tunc gemitus (comitum manus anxia vidit,
vidit et exemplum genetrix gavisaeque novit),
quae lamenta tuli! veniam concedite, manes,
fas dixisse, pater: non tu mihi plura dedisses. 265
felix ille patrem vacuis circumdedit ulnis;
vellet et Elysia quamvis in sede locatum
abripere et Danaas iterum portare per umbras;
temptantem et vivos molitum in Tartara gressus
detulit infernae vates longaeva Dianae; 270
sic chelyn Odrysiam pigro transmisit Averno
causa minor, sic Thessalicis Admetus in oris.
si lux una retro Phylaceida rettulit umbram,
cur nihil exoret, genitor, chelys aut tua manes
aut mea? fas mihi sic patrios contingere vultus, 275
fas iunxisse manus, et lex quaecumque sequatur.

At vos, umbrarum reges Aetnaeaeque Iuno,
si laudanda precor, taedas auferte comasque
Eumenidum; nullo sonet asper ianitor ore,
centauros Hydraeque greges Scyllaeaeque monstra 280
aversae celent valles, umbramque senilem
invitet ripis, discussa plebe, supremus
vector et in media componat molliter alga.
ite, pii manes Graiumque examina vatum,
inlustremque animam Lethaeis spargite sertis 285
et monstrate nemus, quo nulla inrupit Erinys.
in quo falsa dies caeloque simillimus aer.

Inde tamen venias melior qua porta malignum
cornea vincit ebur, somnique in imagine monstra,
quae solitus. sic sacra Numae ritusque colendos 290
mitis Aricino dictabat Nympha sub antro,
Scipio sic plenos Latio Iove ducere somnos

creditur Ausoniis, sic non sine Apolline Sylla.

IV. SOMNVS

Crimine quo merui, iuvenis placidissime divum,
quove errore miser, donis ut solus egerem,
Somne, tuis? tacet omne pecus volucresque feraeque
et simulant fessos curvata cacumina somnos,
nec trucibus fluviis idem sonus; occidit horror 5
aequoris, et terris maria adclinata quiescunt.
septima iam rediens Phoebe mihi respicit aegras
stare genas; totidem Oetaeae Paphiaeque revisunt
lampades et totiens nostros Tithonia questus
praeterit et gelido spargit miserata flagello. 10
unde ego sufficiam? non si mihi lumina mille,
quae sacer alterna tantum statione tenebat
Argus et haud umquam vigilabat corpore toto.
at nunc heu! si aliquis longa sub nocte puellae
brachia nexa tenens ultro te, Somne, repellit, 15
inde veni; nec te totas infundere pennas
luminibus compello meis++hoc turba precatur
laetior: extremo me tange cacumine virgae,
sufficit, aut leviter suspenso poplite transi.

V. EPICEDION IN PVERVM SVVM

Me miserum! neque enim verbis sollemnibus ulla
incipiam nec Castaliae vocalibus undis,
invisus Phoeboque gravis. quae vestra, sorores,
orgia, Pieriae, quas incestavimus aras?
dicite, post poenam liceat commissa fateri. 5
numquid inaccessu posui vestigia luco?
num vetito de fonte bibi? quae culpa, quis error
quem luimus tantis? morientibus ecce lacertis
viscera nostra tenens animaque avellitur infans,
non de stirpe quidem nec qui mea nomina ferret 10
oraeque; non fueram genitor, sed cernite fletus
liventesque genas et credite planctibus orbi.
orbis ego. huc patres et aperto pectore matres
convenient; cineremque oculis et crimina ferte,
si qua sub uberibus plenis ad funera natos 15
ipsa gradu labente tulit madidumque cecidit
pectus et ardentes restinxit lacte papillas,
quisquis adhuc tenerae signatum flore iuventae
immersit cineri iuvenem primaque iacentis
serpere crudelis vidit lanugine flammam, 20
adsit et alterno mecum clamore fatiscat:
vincetur lacrimis, et te, Natura, pudebit.
tanta mihi feritas, tanta est insania luctus.
hoc quoque cum ni<tor>, ter dena luce peracta,
adclinis tumul<o en pla>nctus in carmina verto, 25
discordesque modos et singultantia verba
molior orsa ly<ra: vis> est, atque ira tacendi
impatiens. sed nec solitae mihi vertice laurus
nec fronti vittatus honos. en taxea marcet
silva comis, hilaesque hederas plorata cupressus 30
excludit ramis; nec eburno pollice chordas
pulso, sed incertam digitis errantibus amens
scindo chelyn. iuvat heu, iuvat inlaudabile carmen
fundere et incompete miserum laudare dolorem.

sic merui, sic me cantuque habituque nefastum 35
aspiciant superi. pudeat Thebasque novumque
Aeaciden: nil iam placidum manabit ab ore.
ille ego qui (quotiens!) blande matrumque patrumque
vulnera, qui vivos potui mulcere dolores,
ille ego lugentum mitis solator, acerbis 40
auditus tumulis et descendantibus umbris,
deficio medicasque manus fomentaque quaero
vulneribus, sed summa, meis. nunc tempus, amici,
quorum ego manantes oculos et saucia tersi
pectora: reddite opem, saevas exsolvite gratis. 45
nimirum cum vestra domus ego funera maestus

* * *

46a

increpitans: 'qui damna doles aliena, repone
infelix lacrimas et tristia carmina serva.'
verum erat: absumptae vires et copia fandi
nulla mihi, dignumque nihil mens fulmine tanto 50
repperit: inferior vox omnis et omnia sordent
verba. ignosce, puer: tu me caligine maestum
obruis. a! durus, viso si vulnere carae
coniugis invenit caneret quod Thracius Orpheus
dulce sibi, si busta Lini complexus Apollo 55
non tacuit. nimius fortasse avidusque doloris
dicar et in lacrimis iustum excessisse pudorem?
quisnam autem gemitus lamentaque nostra rependis?
o nimium felix, nimium crudelis et expers
imperii, Fortuna, tui qui dicere legem 60
fletibus aut fines audet censere dolendi!
incitat heu! planctus; potius fugientia ripas
flumina detineas rapidis aut ignibus obstes,
quam miseros lugere vetes. tamen ille severus,
quisquis is est, nostrae cognoscat vulnera causae. 65

Non ego mercatus Pharia de puppe loquaces
delicias doctumque sui convicia Nili
infantem lingua nimium salibusque protervum
dilexi: meus ille, meus. tellure cadentem
aspexi atque unctum genitali carmine fovi, 70

poscentemque novas tremulis ululatibus auras
inserui vitae. quid plus tribuere parentes?
quin alios ortus libertatemque sub ipsis
uberibus tibi, parve, dedi; heu! munera nostra
rideres ingratus adhuc. properaverit ille, 75
sed merito properabat, amor, ne perderet ullum
libertas tam parva diem. nonne horridus ipsos
invidia superos iniustaque Tartara pulsem?
nonne gemam te, care puer? quo sospite natos
non cupii, primo gemitum qui protinus ortu 80
implicuit fixitque mihi, cui verba sonosque
monstravi questusque et vulnera caeca resolvens,
reptantemque solo demissus ad oscula dextra
erexi, blandoque sinu iam iamque cadentes
exsopire genas dulcesque accersere somnos. 85
cui nomen vox prima meum ludusque tenello
risus, et a nostro veniebant gaudia vultu.

THE ACHILLEID

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Liber Primus

Magnanimum Aeaciden formidatamque Tonanti
progeniem et patrio vetitam succedere caelo,
diva, refer. quamquam acta viri multum inclita cantu
Maeonio (sed plura vacant), nos ire per omnem —
sic amor est — heroa velis Scyroque latentem 5
Dulichia proferre tuba nec in Hectore tracto
sistere, sed tota iuvenem deducere Troia.
tu modo, si veterem digno deplevimus haustu,
da fontes mihi, Phoebe, novos ac fronde secunda
necte comas: neque enim Aonium nemus advena pulso 10
nec mea nunc primis augescunt tempora vittis.
scit Dircaeus ager meque inter prisca parentum
nomina cumque suo numerant Amphione Thebae.

At tu, quem longe primum stupet Itala virtus
Graiaque, cui geminae florent vatumque ducumque 15
certatim laurus — olim dolet altera vinci — ,
da veniam ac trepidum patere hoc sudare parumper
pulvere: te longo necdum fidente paratu
molimur magnusque tibi praeludit Achilles.

Solverat Oebalio classem de litore pastor 20
Dardanus incautas blande populatus Amyclas
plenaque materni referens praesagia somni
culpatum relegat iter, qua condita ponto
fluctibus invisus iam Nereis imperat Helle,
cum Thetis Idaeos — heu numquam vana parentum 25
auguria! — expavit vitreo sub gurgite remos.
nec mora et undosis turba comitante sororum
prosiluit thalamis: fervent coeuntia Phruxi
litora et angustum dominas non explicat aequor.

Illa ubi discusso primum subit aera ponto, 30
‘Me petit haec, mihi classis’ ait ‘funesta minatur,
agnosco monitus et Protea vera locutum.
ecce novam Priamo facibus de puppe levatis
fert Bellona nurum: video iam mille carinis

Ionium Aegaeumque premi; nec sufficit, omnis 35
quod plaga Graiugenum tumidis coniurat Atridis:
iam pelago terrisque meus quaeretur Achilles,
et volet ipse sequi. quid enim cunabula parvo
Pelion et torvi commisimus antra magistri?
illic, ni fallor, Lapitharum proelia ludit 40
inprobus et patria iam se metitur in hasta.
o dolor, o seri materno in corde timores!
non potui infelix, cum primum gurgite nostro
Rhoeteae cecidere trabes, attollere magnum
aequor et incesti praedonis vela profunda 45
tempestate sequi cunctasque inferre sorores?
nunc quoque — sed tardum, iam plena iniuria raptae.
ibo tamen pelagique deos dextramque secundi,
quod superest, complexa Iovis per Tethyos annos
grandaevumque patrem supplex miseranda rogabo 50
unam hiemem.’ Dixit magnumque in tempore regem
aspicit. Oceano veniebat ab hospite, mensis
laetus et aequoreo diffusus nectare vultus,
unde hiemes ventique silent; cantuque quieto
armigeri Tritones eunt scopulosaque cete 55
Tyrrhenique greges circumque infraque rotantur
rege salutato; placidis ipse arduus undis
eminet et triplici telo iubet ire iugales;
illi spumiferos glomerant a pectore cursus,
pone natant delentque pedum vestigia cauda; 60
cum Thetis: ‘O magni genitor rectorque profundi,
aspicis in qualis miserum patefeceris usus
aequor? eunt tutis terrarum crimina velis,
ex quo iura freti maiestatemque repostam
rupit Iasonia puppis Pagasaea rapina. 65
en aliud furto scelus et spolia hospita portans
navigat iniustae temerarius arbiter Idae,
eheu quos gemitus terris caeloque daturus,
quos mihi! sic Phrygiae pensamus gaudia palmae,
hi Veneris mores, hoc gratae munus alumnae. 70
has saltem — num semideos nostrumque reportant

Thesea? — si quis adhuc undis honor, obrue puppes,
aut permitte fretum! nulla inclementia: fas sit
pro nato timuisse mihi. da pelleret luctus,
nec tibi de tantis placeat me fluctibus unum 75
litus et Iliaci scopulos habitare sepulcri.’

Orabat laniata genas et pectore nudo
caeruleis obstabat equis. sed rector aquarum
invitat curru dictisque ita mulcet amicis:
‘Ne pete Dardaniam frustra, Theti, mergere classem; 80
fata vetant: ratus ordo deis miscere cruentas
Europamque Asiamque manus, consultaque belli
Iuppiter et tristes edixit caedibus annos.
quem tu illic natum Sigeo in pulvere, quanta
aspicies victrix Phrygiarum funera matrum, 85
cum tuus Aeacides tepido modo sanguine Teucros
undabit campos, modo crassa exire vetabit
flumina et Hectoreo tardabit funere currus
inpelletque manu nostros, opera inrita, muros!
Pelea iam desiste queri thalamosque minores: 90
crederis peperisse Iovi; nec inulta dolebis
cognatisque utere fretis: dabo tollere fluctus,
cum reduces Danaï nocturnaque signa Caphereus
exseret et dirum pariter quaeremus Ulixem.’

Dixerat. illa gravi vultum demissa repulsa, 95
quae iam excire fretum et ratibus bellare parabat
Iliacis, alios animo commenta paratus,
tristis ad Haemonias detorquet brachia terras.
ter conata manu, liquidum ter gressibus aequor
reppulit et niveas feriunt vada Thessala plantas. 100
laetantur montes et conubialia pandunt
antra sinus lateque deae Sperchios abundat
obvius et dulci vestigia circuit unda.
illa nihil gavisā locis, sed coepta fatigat
pectore consilia et sollers pietate magistra 105
longaevum Chirona petit. domus ardua montem
perforat et longo suspendit Pelion arcu;
pars exhausta manu, partem sua ruperat aetas.

signa tamen divumque tori et quem quisque sacrarit
accubitu genioque locum monstrantur; at intra 110
Centauri stabula alta patent, non aequa nefandis
fratribus: hic hominum nullos experta cruores
spicula nec truncae bellis genialibus orni
aut consanguineos fracti crateres in hostes,
sed pharetrae insontes et inania terga ferarum. 115
haec quoque dum viridis; nam tunc labor unus inermi
nosse salutiferas dubiis animantibus herbas,
aut monstrare lyra veteres heroas alumno.
et tunc venatu rediturum in limine primo
opperiens properatque dapes largoque serenat 120
igne domum, cum visa procul de litore surgens
Nereis; erumpit silvis — dant gaudia vires —
notaque desueto crepuit senis ungula campo.
tunc blandus dextra atque imos demissus in armos
pauperibus tectis inducit et admonet antri. 125

Iamdudum tacito lustrat Thetis omnia visu
nec perpressa moras: 'Ubinam mea pignora, Chiron,
dic', ait, 'aut cur ulla puer iam tempora ducit
te sine? non merito trepidus sopor atraque matri
signa deum et magnos utinam mentita timores? 130
namque modo infensos utero mihi contuor enses,
nunc planctu livere manus, modo in ubera saevas
ire feras; saepe ipsa — nefas! — sub inania natum
Tartara et ad Stygios iterum fero mergere fontes.
hos abolere metus magici iubet ordine sacri 135
Carpathius vates puerumque sub axe peracto
secretis lustrare fretis, ubi litora summa
Oceani et genitor tepet inlabentibus astris
Pontus. ibi ignotis horrenda piacula divis
donaque — sed longum cuncta enumerare vetorque. 140
trade magis!' sic ficta parens: neque enim ille dedisset,
si molles habitus et tegmina foeda fateri
ausa seni. tunc ipse refert: 'Duc, optima, quaeso,
duc, genetrix, humilique deos infringe precatu.
nam superant tua vota modum placandaque multum 145

invidia est. non addo metum, sed vera fatebor:
nescio quid magnum — nec me patria omina fallunt —
vis festina parat tenuesque supervenit annos.
olim et ferre minas avideque audire solebat
imperia et nostris procul haut discedere ab antris; 150
nunc illum non Ossa capit, non Pelion ingens
Pharsaliaeve nives. ipsi mihi saepe queruntur
Centauri raptasque domos abstractaque coram
armenta et semet campis fluviisque fugari,
insidiasque et bella parant tumideque minantur. 155
olim equidem, Argoos pinus cum Thessala reges
hac veheret, iuvenem Alciden et Thesea vidi-
-sed taceo.' Figit gelidus Nereida pallor:
ille aderat multo sudore et pulvere maior,
et tamen arma inter festinatosque labores 160
dulcis adhuc visu: niveo natat ignis in ore
purpureus fulvoque nitet coma gratior auro.
necdum prima nova lanugine vertitur aetas,
tranquillaque faces oculis et plurima vultu
mater inest: qualis Lycia venator Apollo 165
cum redit et saevis permutat plectra pharetris.
forte et laetus adest — o quantum gaudia formae
adiciunt! — : fetam Pholoes sub rupe leaenam
perculerat ferro vacuisque reliquerat antris
ipsam, sed catulos adportat et incitat ungues. 170
quos tamen, ut fido genetrix in limine visa est,
abicit exceptamque avidis circumligat ulnis,
iam gravis amplexu iamque aequus vertice matri.
insequitur magno iam tunc conexus amore
Patroclus tantisque extenditur aemulus actis, 175
par studiis aevique modis, sed robore longe,
et tamen aequali visurus Pergama fato.

Protinus ille subit rapido quae proxima saltu
flumina fumantisque genas crinemque novatur
fontibus: Eurotae qualis vada Castor anhelio 180
intrat equo fessumque sui iubar excitat astri.
miratur comitque senex, nunc pectora mulcens

nunc fortis umeros; angunt sua gaudia matrem.
tunc libare dapes Baccheaque munera Chiron
orat et attonitae varia oblectamina nectens 185
elicit extremo chelyn et solantia curas
fila movet leviterque expertas pollice chordas
dat puero. canit ille libens inmania laudum
semina: quot tumidae superarit iussa novercae
Amphitryoniades, crudum quo Bebryca caestu 190
obruerit Pollux, quanto circumdata nexu
ruperit Aegides Minoia bracchia tauri,
maternos in fine toros superisque gravatum
Pelion: hic victo risit Thetis anxia vultu.
nox trahit in somnos; saxo collabitur ingens 195
Centaurus blandusque umeris se innectit Achilles,
quamquam ibi fida parens, adsuetaque pectora mavult.

At Thetis undisonis per noctem in rupibus astans,
quae nato secreta velit, quibus abdere terris
destinet, huc illuc divisa mente volutat. 200
proxima, sed studiis multum Mavortia, Thrace;
nec Macetum gens dura placet laudumque daturi
Cecropidae stimulos; nimium opportuna carinis
Sestos Abydenique sinus. placet ire per artas
Cycladas; hic spretae Myconosque humilisque Seriphos 205
et Lemnos non aequa viris atque hospita Delos
gentibus. inbelli nuper Lycomedis ab aula
virgineos coetus et litora persona ludo
audierat, duros laxantem Aegaeona nexus
missa sequi centumque dei numerare catenas. 210
haec placet, haec timidae tellus tutissima matri.
qualis vicino volucris iam sedula partu
iamque timens, qua fronde domum suspendat inanem;
providet hic ventos, hic anxia cogitat angues,
hic homines: tandem dubiae placet umbra, novisque 215
vix stetit in ramis et protinus arbor amatur.

Altera consilio superest tristemque fatigat
cura deam, natum ipsa sinu complexa per undas
an magno Tritone ferat, ventosne volucres

advocet an pelago solitam Thaumantida pasci. 220
elicit inde fretis et murice frenat acuto
delphinas biiugos, quos illi maxima Tethys
gurgite Atlanteo pelagi sub valle sonora
nutrierat — nullis vada per Neptunia glaucae
tantus honos formae nandique potentia nec plus 225
pectoris humani — ; iubet hos subsistere pleno
litore, ne nudae noceant contagia terrae.
ipsa dehinc toto resolutum pectore Achillem,
qui pueris sopor, Haemonii de rupibus antri
ad placidas deportat aquas et iussa tacere 230
litora; monstrat iter totoque effulgurat orbe
Cynthia. prosequitur divam celeresque recursus
securus pelagi Chiron rogat udaeque celat
lumina et abreptos subito iamiamque latentes
erecto prospectat equo, qua cana parumper 235
spumant signa fugae et liquido perit orbita ponto.
illum non alias rediturum ad Thessala Tempe
iam tristis Pholoe, iam nubilus ingemit Othrys
et tenuior Sperchios aquis speluncaque docti
muta senis; quaerunt puerilia carmina Fauni 240
et sperata diu plorant conubia Nymphae.

Iam premit astra dies humilique ex aequore Titan
rorantes evolvit equos et ab aethere magno
sublatum curru pelagus cadit, at vada mater
Scyria iamdudum fluctus emensa tenebat, 245
exierantque iugo fessi delphines erili,
cum pueri tremefacta quies oculique patentes
infusum sensere diem. stupet aere primo:
quae loca, qui fluctus, ubi Pelion? omnia versa
atque ignota videt dubitatque agnoscere matrem. 250
occupat illa manu blandeque adfata paventem:
‘Si mihi, care puer, thalamos sors aequa tulisset,
quos dabat, aetheriis ego te complexa tenerem
sidus grande plagis, magnique puerpera caeli
nil humiles Parcas terrenaque fata vererer. 255
nunc inpar tibi, nate, genus, praecclusaque leti

tantum a matre via est; quin et metuenda propinquant
tempora et extremis admota pericula metis.
cedamus, paulumque animos submitte viriles
atque habitus dignare meos. si Lydia dura 260
pensa manu mollesque tulit Tirynthius hastas,
si decet aurata Bacchum vestigia palla
verrere, virgineos si Iuppiter induit artus,
nec magnum ambigui fregerunt Caenea sexus:
hac sine, quaeso, minas nubemque exire malignam. 265
mox iterum campos, iterum Centaurica reddam
lustra tibi: per ego hoc decus et ventura iuventae
gaudia, si terras humilemque experta maritum
te propter, si progenitum Stygos amne severo
armavi — totumque utinam! — , cape tuta parumper 270
tegmina nil nocitura animo. cur ora reducis
quidve parant oculi? pudet hoc mitescere cultu?
per te, care puer, cognata per aequora iuro,
nesciet hoc Chiron.' sic horrida pectora tractat
nequiquam mulcens; obstat genitorque roganti 275
nutritorque ingens et cruda exordia magnae
indolis. effrenae tumidum velut igne iuventae
si quis equum primis submittere temptet habenis:
ille diu campis fluviisque et honore superbo
gavisus non colla iugo, non aspera praebet 280
ora lupis dominique fremit captivus inire
imperia atque alios miratur discere cursus.

Quis deus attonitae fraudes astumque parenti
contulit? indocilem quae mens detraxit Achillem?
Palladi litoreae celebrabat Scyros honorum 285
forte diem, placidoque satae Lycomede sorores
luce sacra patriis, quae rara licentia, muris
exierant dare veris opes divaeque severas
fronde ligare comas et spargere floribus hastam.
omnibus eximium formae decus, omnibus idem 290
cultus et expleto teneri iam fine pudoris
virginitas matura toris annique tumentes.
sed quantum virides pelagi Venus addita Nymphas

obruit, aut umeris quantum Diana relinquit
Naidas, effulget tantum regina decori 295
Deidamia chori pulchrisque sororibus obstat.
illius et roseo flammatur purpura vultu
et gemmis lux maior inest et blandius aurum:
atque ipsi par forma deaest, si pectoris angues
ponat et exempta pacetur casside vultus. 300
hanc ubi ducentem longe socia agmina vidit,
trux puer et nullo temeratus pectora motu
deriguit totisque novum bibit ossibus ignem.
nec latet haustus amor, sed fax vibrata medullis
in vultus atque ora redit lucemque genarum 305
tinguit et impulsam tenui sudore pererrat.
lactea Massagetae veluti cum pocula fuscant
sanguine puniceo vel ebur corrumpitur ostro,
sic variis manifesta notis palletque rubetque
flamma repens. eat atque ultro ferus hospita sacra 310
disiciat turbae securus et inmemor aevi,
ni pudor et iunctae teneat reverentia matris.
ut pater armenti quondam ductorque futurus,
cui nondum toto peraguntur cornua gyro,
cum sociam pastus niveo candore iuvencam 315
aspicit, ardescunt animi primusque per ora
spumat amor, spectant hilares obstantque magistri.

Occupat arrepto iam conscia tempore mater:
‘Hasne inter simulare choros et bracchia ludo
nectere, nate, grave est? gelida quid tale sub Ossa 320
Peliacisque iugis? o si mihi iungere curas
atque alium portare sinu contingat Achillem!’
mulcetur laetumque rubet visusque protervos
obliquat vestesque manu leviore repellit.
aspicit ambiguum genetrix cogique volentem 325
iniecitque sinus; tum colla rigentia mollit
submittitque graves umeros et fortia laxat
bracchia et inpexos certo domat ordine crines
ac sua dilecta cervice monilia transfert;
et picturato cohibens vestigia limbo 330

incessum motumque docet fandique pudorem.
qualiter artifice victurae pollice cerae
accipiunt formas ignemque manumque sequuntur,
talis erat divae natum mutantis imago.
nec luctata diu; superest nam plurimus illi 335
invita virtute decor, fallitque tuentes
ambiguus tenuique latens discrimine sexus.

Procedunt, iterumque monens iterumque fatigans
blanda Thetis: 'Sic ergo gradum, sic ora manusque,
nate, feres comitesque modis imitabere fictis, 340
ne te suspectum molli non misceat aulae
rektor et incepti pereant mendacia furti.'
dicit et admoto non cessat comere tactu.
sic ubi virgineis Hecate lassata Therapnis
ad patrem fratremque redit, comes haeret eunti 345
mater et ipsa umeros exsertaque brachia velat;
ipsa arcum pharetrasque locat vestemque latentem
deducit sparsosque tumet componere crines.

Protinus adgreditur regem atque ibi testibus aris
'Hanc tibi' ait 'nostri germanam, rektor, Achillis — 350
nonne vides ut torva genas aequandaque fratri? —
tradimus. arma umeris arcumque animosa petebat
ferre et Amazonio conubia pellere ritu.
sed mihi curarum satis est pro stirpe virili;
haec calathos et sacra ferat, tu frange regendo 355
indocilem sexuque tene, dum nubilis aetas
solvendusque pudor; neve exercere protervas
gymnadas aut lustris nemorum concede vagari.
intus ale et similes inter seclude puellas;
litore praecipue portuque arcere memento. 360
vidisti modo vela Phrygum: iam mutua iura
fallere transmissae pelago didicere carinae.'

Accedit dictis pater ingenioque parentis
occultum Aeaciden — quis divum fraudibus obstat? —
accipit; ultro etiam veneratur supplice dextra 365
et grates electus agit: nec turba piarum
Scyriadum cessat nimio defigere visu

virginis ora novae, quantum cervice comisque
emineat quantumque umeros ac pectora fundat.
dehinc sociare choros castisque accedere sacris 370
hortantur ceduntque loco et contingere gaudent.
qualiter Idaliae volucres, ubi mollia frangunt
nubila, iam longum caeloque domoque gregatae,
si iunxit pinnas diversoque hospita tractu
venit avis, cunctae primum mirantur et horrent; 375
mox propius propiusque volant, atque aere in ipso
paulatim fecere suam plausuque secundo
circumeunt hilares et ad alta cubilia ducunt.

Digreditur multum cunctata in limine mater,
dum repetit monitus arcanaque murmura figit 380
auribus et tacito dat verba novissima vultu.
tunc excepta freto longe cervice reflexa
abnatat et blandis adfatur litora votis:
‘Cara mihi tellus, magnae cui pignora curae
depositumque ingens timido commisimus astu, 385
sis felix taceasque, precor, quo more tacebat
Creta Rheae; te longus honos aeternaque cingent
templa nec instabili fama superabere Delo,
et ventis et sacra fretis interque vadosas
Cycladas, Aegaeae frangunt ubi saxa procellae, 390
Nereidum tranquilla domus iurandaque nautis
insula; ne solum Danaas admitte carinas,
ne, precor! “Hic thiasi tantum et nihil utile bellis:”
hoc famam narrare doce, dumque arma parantur
Dorica et alternum Mavors interfurit orbem, — 395
cedo equidem — sit virgo pii Lycomedis Achilles.’

Interea meritos ultrix Europa dolores
dulcibus armorum furiis et supplice regum
conquestu flammata movet; quippe ambit Atrides
ille magis, cui nupta domi, facinusque relatu 400
asperat Iliacum: captam sine Marte, sine armis
progeniem caeli Spartaeque potentis alumnam,
iura, fidem, superos una calcata rapina.
hoc foedus Phrygium, haec geminae commercia terrae?

quid maneat populos, ubi tanta iniuria primos 405
degrassata duces? — coeunt gens omnis et aetas:
nec tantum exciti, bimari quos Isthmia vallo
claustra nec undisonae quos circuit umbo Maleae,
sed procul, admotas Phrixi qua semita iungi
Europamque Asiamque vetat, quasque ordine gentes 410
litore Abydeno maris alligat unda superni.
fervet amor belli concussasque erigit urbes.
aera domat Temese, quatitur navalibus ora
Eubois, innumera resonant incude Mycenae,
Pisa novat currus, Nemee dat terga ferarum, 415
Cirrha sagittiferas certat stipare pharetras,
Lerna gravis clipeos caesis vestire iuvcis.
dat bello pedites Aetolus et asper Acarnan,
Argos agit turmas, vacuantur pascua ditis
Arcadiae, frenat celeres Epiros alumnos, 420
Phocis et Aoniae iaculis rarescitis umbrae,
murorum tormenta Pylos Messenaque tendunt.
nulla inmundus humus; velluntur postibus altis
arma olim dimissa patrum, flammisque liquescunt
dona deum; ereptum superis Mars efferat aurum. 425
nusquam umbrae veteres: minor Othrys et ardua sidunt
Taygeta, exuti videntur aera montes.
iam natat omne nemus; caeduntur robora classi,
silva minor remis. ferrum lassatur in usus
innumeros, quod rostra liget, quod muniat arma, 430
belligeros quod frenet equos, quod mille catenis
squalentis nectat tunicas, quod sanguine fumet
vulneraque alta bibat, quod conspirante veneno
inpellat mortes; tenuant umentia saxa
attritu et pigris addunt mucronibus iras. 435
nec modus aut arcus lentare aut fundere glandes
aut torrere sudes galeasque attollere conis.
hos inter motus pigrum gemit una quietem
Thessalia et geminis incusat fata querellis,
quod senior Peleus nec adhuc maturus Achilles. 440
Iam Pelopis terras Graiumque exhauserat orbem

praecipitans in transtra viros insanus equosque
Bellipotens. fervent portus et operta carinis
stagna suasque hiemes classis promota suosque
attollit fluctus; ipsum iam puppibus aequor 445
deficit et totos consumunt carbasa ventos.

Prima ratis Danaas Hecateia congregat Aulis,
rupibus expositis longique crepidine dorsi
Euboicum scandens Aulis mare, litora multum
montivagae dilecta deae, iuxtaque Caphereus 450
latratum pelago tollens caput. ille Pelasgas
ut vidit tranare rates, ter monte ter undis
intonuit saevaeque dedit praesagia noctis.
coetus ibi armorum Troiae fatalis, ibi ingens
iuratur bellum, donec sol annuus omnes 455
conficeret metas. tunc primum Graecia vires
contemplata suas; tunc sparsa ac dissona moles
in corpus vultumque coit et rege sub uno
disposita est. sic curva feras indago latentes
claudit et admotis paulatim cassibus artat. 460
illae ignem sonitumque pavent diffusaque linquunt
avia miranturque suum decrescere montem,
donec in angustam ceciderunt undique vallem;
inque vicem stupuere greges socioque timore
mansuescunt: simul hirtus aper, simul ursa lupusque 465
cogitur et captos contempsit cerva leones.

Sed quamquam et gemini pariter sua bella capessant
Atridae famamque avida virtute paternam
Tydides Sthenelusque premant, nec cogitet annos
Antilochus septemque Ajax umbone coruscet 470
armenti reges atque aequum moenibus orbem,
consiliisque armisque vigil contendat Ulixes:
omnis in absentem belli manus ardet Achillem,
nomen Achillis amant et in Hectora solus Achilles
poscitur; illum unum Teucris Priamoque loquuntur 475
fatalem. quis enim Haemoniis sub vallibus alter
creverit effossa reptans nive? cuius adortus
cruda rudimenta et teneros formaverit annos

Centaurus? patrii propior cui linea caeli,
quemve alium Stygios tulerit secreta per amnes 480
Nereis et pulchros ferro praestruxerit artus?
haec Graiae castris iterant traduntque cohortes.
cedit turba ducum vincique haud maesta fatetur.
sic cum pallentes Phlegraea in castra coirent
caelicolae iamque Odrysiam Gradivus in hastam 485
surgeret et Libycos Tritonia tolleret angues
ingentemque manu curvaret Delius arcum,
stabat anghela metu solum Natura Tonantem
respiens, quando ille hiemes tonitrusque vocaret
nubibus, igniferam quot fulmina posceret Aetnen. 490

Atque ibi dum mixta vallati plebe suorum
et maris et belli consultant tempora reges,
increpitans magno vatem Calchanta tumultu
Protesilaus ait — namque huic bellare cupido
praecipua et primae iam tunc data gloria mortis — : 495
‘O nimium Phoebi tripodumque oblite tuorum
Thestoride, quando ora deo possessa movebis
iustius aut quaenam Parcarum occulta recludes?
cernis ut ignotum cuncti stupeantque fremantque
Aeaciden? sordet volgo Calydonius heros 500
et magno genitus Telamone Ajaxque secundus;
nos quoque — sed Mavors et Troia arrepta probabunt.
illum neglectis — pudet heu! — ductoribus omnes
belligerum ceu numen amant. dic ocus: aut cur
serta comis et multus honos? quibus abditus oris 505
quave iubes tellure peti? nam fama nec antris
Chironis patria nec degere Peleos aula.
heia, inrumpe deos et fata latentia vexa,
laurigerosque ignes, si quando, avidissimus hauri!
arma horrenda tibi saevosque remisimus enses, 510
numquam has inbelles galea violabere vittas,
sed felix numeroque ducum praestantior omni,
si magnum Danais pro te dependis Achillem.’

Iamdudum trepido circumfert lumina motu
inrantemque deum primo pallore fatetur 515

Thestorides; mox igne genas et sanguine torquens
nec socios nec castra videt, sed caecus et absens
nunc superum magnos deprendit in aethere coetus,
nunc sagas adfatur aves, nunc dura sororum
licia, turiferas modo consulit anxius aras 520
flammarumque apicem rapit et caligine sacra
pascitur. exsiliunt crines rigidisque laborat
vitta comis, nec colla loco nec in ordine gressus.
tandem fessa tremens longis mugitibus ora
solvit, et oppositum vox eluctata furorem est: 525
'Quo rapis ingentem magni Chironis alumnum
femineis, Nerei, dolis? huc mitte: quid aufers?
non patiar: meus iste, meus. tu diva profundi?
et me Phoebus agit. latebris quibus abdere temptas
eversorem Asiae? video per Cycladas altas 530
attonitam et turpi quaerentem litora furto.
occidimus: placuit Lycomedis conscia tellus.
o scelus! en fluxae veniunt in pectora vestes.
scinde, puer, scinde et timidae ne cede parenti.
ei mihi raptus abit! quaenam haec procul inproba virgo?' 535

Hic nutante gradu stetit amissisque furoris
viribus ante ipsas tremefactus conruit aras.
tunc haerentem Ithacum Calydonius occupat heros:
'Nos vocat iste labor: neque enim comes ire recusem,
si tua cura trahat. licet ille sonantibus antris 540
Tethyos aversae gremioque prematur aquosi
Nereos, invenies. tu tantum providus astu
tende animum vigilem fecundumque erige pectus:
non mihi quis vatum dubiis in casibus ausit
fata videre prior.' subicit gavisus Ulixes: 545
'Sic deus omnipotens firmet, sic adnuat illa
virgo paterna tibi! sed me spes lubrica tardat:
grande quidem armatum castris inducere Achillem,
sed si fata negent, quam foedum ac triste reverti!
vota tamen Danaum non intemptata relinquam. 550
iamque adeo aut aderit mecum Peleius heros,
aut verum penitus latet et sine Apolline Calchas.'

Conclamant Danaï stimulatque Agamemno volentes.
laxantur coetus resolutaque murmure laeto
agmina discedunt, quales iam nocte propinqua 555
e pastu referuntur aves, vel in antra reverti
melle novo gravidas mitis videt Hybla catervas.
nec mora, iam dexteras Ithacesia carbasus auras
poscit, et in remis hilaris sedere iuventus.

At procul occultum falsi sub imagine sexus 560
Aeaciden furto iam noverat una latenti
Deidamia virum; sed opertae conscia culpa
cuncta pavet tacitasque putat sentire sorores.
namque ut virgineo stetit in grege durus Achilles
exsolvitque rudem genetrix digressa pudorem, 565
protinus elegit comitem, quamquam omnis in illum
turba coit, blandique novas nil tale timenti
admovet insidias: illam sequiturque premitque
improbis, illam oculis iterumque iterumque resumit.
nunc nimius lateri non evitantis inhaeret, 570
nunc levibus sertis, lapsis nunc sponte canistris,
nunc thyrsos parcente ferit, modo dulcia notae
fila lyrae tenuesque modos et carmina monstrat
Chironis ducitque manum digitosque sonanti
infringit citharae, nunc occupat ora canentis 575
et ligat amplexus et mille per oscula laudat.
illa libens discit, quo vertice Pelion, et quis
Aeacides, puerique auditum nomen et actus
adsidue stupet et praesentem cantat Achillem.
ipsa quoque et validos proferre modestius artus 580
et tenuare rudes attrito pollice lanas
demonstrat reficitque colos et perdita dura
pensa manu; vocisque sonum pondusque tenentis,
quodque fugit comites, nimio quod lumine sese
figat et in verbis intempestivus anhelet, 585
miratur; iam iamque dolos aperire parantem
virginea levitate fugit prohibetque fateri.
sic sub matre Rhea iuvenis regnator Olympi
oscula securae dabat insidiosa sorori

frater adhuc, medii donec reverentia cessit 590
sanguinis et versos germana expavit amores.
[tandem detecti timidæ Nereidos astus.]

Lucus Agenorei sublimis ad orgia Bacchi
stabat et admissum caelo nemus; huius in umbra
alternam renovare pia trieterida matres 595
consuerant scissumque pecus terraque revulsas
ferre trabes gratosque deo praestare furores.
lex procul ire mares; iterat praecepta verendus
ductor, inaccessumque viris edicitur antrum.
nec satis est: stat fine dato metuenda sacerdos 600
exploratque aditus, ne quis temerator oberret
agmine femineo: tacitus sibi risit Achilles.
illum virgineae ducentem signa catervae
magnaque difficili solventem bracchia motu —
et sexus pariter decet et mendacia matris — 605
mirantur comites. nec iam pulcherrima turbae
Deidamia suae tantumque admota superbo
vincitur Aeacidae, quantum premit ipsa sorores.
ut vero e tereti demisit nebrida collo
errantesque sinus hedera collegit et alte 610
cinxit purpureis flaventia tempora vittis
vibravitque gravi redimitum missile dextra,
attonito stat turba metu sacrisque relictis
illum ambire libet pronosque attollere vultus.
talis, ubi ad Thebas vultumque animumque remisit 615
Euhius et patrio satiavit pectora luxu,
serta comis mitramque levat thyrsusque virentem
armat et hostiles invisit fortior Indos.

Scandebat roseo medii fastigia caeli
Luna iugo, totis ubi somnus inertior alis 620
defluit in terras mutumque amplectitur orbem.
consedere chori paulumque exercita pulsu
aera tacent, tenero cum solus ab agmine Achilles
haec secum: 'Quonam timidæ commenta parentis
usque feres? primumque imbelli carcere perdes 625
flore[m] animi? non tela licet Mavortia dextra,

non trepidas agitare feras? ubi campus et amnes
Haemonii? quaerisne meos, Sperchie, natatus
promissasque comas? an desertoris alumni
nullus honos, Stygiasque procul iam raptus ad umbras 630
dicor, et orbatus plangit mea funera Chiron?
tu nunc tela manu, nostros tu dirigis arcus
nutritosque mihi scandis, Patrocle, iugales:
ast ego pampineis diffundere bracchia thyrsis
et tenuare colus — pudet haec taedetque fateri — 635
iam scio. quin etiam dilectae virginis ignem
aequaevamque facem captus noctesque diesque
dissimulas. quonam usque premes urentia pectus
vulnera? teque marem — pudet heu! — nec amore probabis?

Sic ait et densa noctis gavisus in umbra 640
tempestiva suis torpere silentia furtis
vi potitur votis et toto pectore veros
admovet amplexus; vidit chorus omnis ab alto
astrorum et tenerae rubuerunt cornua Lunae.
illa quidem clamore nemus montemque replevit; 645
sed Bacchi comites, discussa nube soporis,
signa choris indicta putant; fragor undique notus
tollitur, et thyrsos iterum vibrabat Achilles,
ante tamen dubiam verbis solatus amicis:
‘Ille ego — quid trepidas? — genitum quem caerulea mater 650
paene Iovi silvis nivibusque inmisit alendum
Thessalicis. nec ego hos cultus aut foeda subissem
tegmina, ni primo te visa in litore: cessi
te propter, tibi pensa manu, tibi mollia gesto
tympana. quid defles magno nurus addita ponto? 655
quid gemis ingentes caelo paritura nepotes?
“Sed pater—” ante igni ferroque excisa iacebit
Scyros et in tumidas ibunt haec versa procellas
moenia, quam saevo mea tu conubia pendas
funere: non adeo parebimus omnia matri.’ 660
[vade sed ereptum celes taceasque pudorem.]

Obstipuit tantis regina exterrita monstis,
quamquam olim suspecta fides, et comminus ipsum

horruit et facies multum mutata fatentis.
quid faciat? casusne suos ferat ipsa parenti 665
seque simul iuvenemque premat, fortassis acerbis
hausurum poenas? et adhuc in corde manebat
ille diu deceptus amor: silet aegra premitque
iam commune nefas; unam placet addere furtis
altricem sociam, precibus quae victa duorum 670
adnuat. illa astu tacito raptumque pudorem
surgentemque uterum atque aegros in pondere menses
occuluit, plenis donec stata tempora metis
attulit et partus index Lucina resolvit.

Iamque per Aegaeos ibat Laertia flexus 675
puppis, et innumerae mutabant Cyclades oras;
iam Paros Olearosque latent; iam raditur alta
Lemnos et a tergo decrescit Bacchica Naxos,
ante oculos crescente Samo; iam Delos opacat
aequor: ibi e celsa libant carchesia puppi 680
responsique fidem et verum Calchanta precantur.
audiit Arquitenens Zephyrumque e vertice Cynthi
inpulit et dubiis pleno dedit omina velo.
it pelago segura ratis: quippe alta Tonantis
iussa Thetin certas fatorum vertere leges 685
arcebant aegram lacrimis ac multa gementem,
quod non erueret pontum ventisque fretisque
omnibus invisum iam tunc sequeretur Ulixem.

Frangebant radios humili iam pronus Olympo
Phoebus et Oceani penetrabile litus anhelis 690
promittebat equis, cum se scopulosa levavit
Scyros; in hanc totos emisit puppe rudentes
dux Laertiades sociisque resumere pontum
imperat et remis Zephyros supplere cadentes.
accedunt iuxta, et magis indubitata magisque 695
Scyros erat placidique super Tritonia custos
litoris. egressi numen venerantur amicae
Aetolusque Ithacusque deae. tunc providus heros,
hospita ne subito terrerent moenia coetu,
puppe iubet remanere suos; ipse ardua fido 700

cum Diomede petit. sed iam praevenerat arcis
litoreae servator Abas ignotaque regi
ediderat, sed Graia tamen, succedere terris
carbasa. procedunt, gemini ceu foedere iuncto
hiberna sub nocte lupi: licet et sua pulset 705
natorumque fames, penitus rabiemque minasque
dissimulant humilesque meant, ne nuntiet hostes
cura canum et trepidos moneat vigilare magistros.

Sic segnes heroes eunt campumque patentem,
qui medius portus celsamque interiacet urbem, 710
alterno sermone terunt; prior occupat acer
Tydides: 'Qua nunc verum ratione paramus
scrutari? namque ambiguo sub pectore pridem
verso, quid inbelles thyrsos mercatus et aera
urbibus in mediis Baccheaque terga mitrasque 715
huc tuleris varioque aspersas nebridas auro?
hisne gravem Priamo Phrygibusque armabis Achillem?'
illi subridens Ithacus paulum ore remisso:
'Haec tibi, virginea modo si Lycomedis in aula est
fraude latens, ultro confessum in proelia ducent 720
Peliden; tu cuncta citus de puppe memento
ferre, ubi tempus erit, clipeumque his iungere donis,
qui pulcher signis auroque asperrimus astat;
nec sat erit: tecum lituo bonus adsit Agyrtes
occultamque tubam tacitos adportet in usus.' 725

Dixerat, atque ipso portarum in limine regem
cernit et ostensa pacem praefatus oliva:
'Magna, reor, pridemque tuas pervenit ad aures
fama trucidis belli, regum placidissime, quod nunc
Europamque Asiamque quatit. si nomina forte 730
huc perlata ducum, fidit quibus ultor Atrides:
hic tibi, quem tanta meliorem stirpe creavit
magnanimus Tydeus, Ithaces ego ductor Ulixes.
causa viae — metuam quid enim tibi cuncta fateri,
cum Graius notaque fide celeberrimus? — : imus 735
explorare aditus invisaque litora Troiae,
quidve parent—' medio sermone intercipit ille:

‘Adnuerit Fortuna, precor, dextrique secudent
ista dei! nunc hospitio mea tecta piumque
inlustrate larem.’ simul intra limina ducit. 740
nec mora, iam mensas famularis turba torosque
instruit. interea visu perlustrat Ulixes
scrutaturque domum, si qua vestigia magnae
virginis aut dubia facies suspecta figura;
porticibusque vagis errat tososque penates, 745
ceu miretur, obit: velut ille cubilia praedae
indubitata tenens muto legit arva Molosso
venator, videat donec sub frondibus hostem
porrectum somno positosque in caespite dentes.

Rumor in arcana iamdudum perstrepat aula, 750
virginibus qua fida domus, venisse Pelasgum
ductores Graiamque ratem sociosque receptos.
iure pavent aliae, sed vix nova gaudia celat
Pelides avidusque novos heroas et arma
vel talis vidisse cupit. iamque atria fervent 755
regali strepitu et picto discumbitur auro,
cum pater ire iubet natas comitesque pudicas
natarum. subeunt, quales Maeotide ripa,
cum Scythicas rapuere domos et capta Getarum
moenia, sepositis epulantur Amazones armis. 760
tum vero intentus vultus ac pectora Ulixes
perlibrat visu, sed nox inlataque fallunt
lumina et extemplo latuit mensura iacentum.
at tamen erectumque genas oculisque vagantem
nullaque virginei servantem signa pudoris 765
defigit comitique obliquo lumine monstrat.
quid nisi praecipitem blando complexa moneret
Deidamia sinu nudataque pectora semper
exsertasque manus umerosque in veste teneret
et prodire toris et poscere vina vetaret 770
saepius et fronti crinale reponeret aurum?
[Argolicis ducibus iam tunc patuisset Achilles.]

Ut placata fames epulis bis terque repostis,
rex prior adloquitur paterisque hortatur Achivos:

'Invideo vestris, fateor, decora inclita gentis 775
 Argolicae, coeptis; utinam et mihi fortior aetas,
 quaeque fuit, Dolopas cum Scyria litora adortos
 perdomui, fregique vadis, quae signa triumphi
 vidistis celsa murorum in fronte, carinas!
 saltem si suboles, aptum quam mittere bello — 780
 nunc ipsi viresque meas et cara videtis 782
 pignora: quando novos dabit haec mihi turba nepotes?'
 dixerat, et sollers arrepto tempore Ulixes:
 'Haut spernenda cupis; quis enim non visere gentes 785
 innumeras variosque duces atque agmina regum
 ardeat? omne simul roburque decusque potentis
 Europae meritos ultro iuravit in enses.
 rura urbesque vacant, montes spoliavimus altos,
 omne fretum longa velorum obtexitur umbra; 790
 tradunt arma patres, rapit inrevocata iuventus.
 non alias umquam tantae data copia famae
 fortibus aut campo maiore exercita virtus.'
 aspicit intentum vigilique haec aure trahentem,
 cum paveant aliae demissaque lumina flectant, 795
 atque iterat: 'Quisquis proavis et gente superba,
 quisquis equo iaculoque potens, qui praevalet arcu,
 omnis honos illic, illic ingentia certant
 nomina: vix timidae matres aut agmina cessant
 virginea; o multum steriles damnatus in annos 800
 invisusque deis, si quem haec nova gloria segnem
 praeterit.' exisset stratis, ni provida signo
 Deidamia dato cunctas hortata sorores
 liquisset mensas ipsum complexa. sed haeret
 respiciens Ithacum coetuque novissimus exit. 805
 ille quoque incepto paulum ex sermone remittit,
 pauca tamen iungens: 'At tu tranquillus in alta
 pace mane carisque para conubia natis,
 quas tibi sidereis divarum voltibus aequas
 fors dedit. ut me olim tacitum reverentia tangit! 810
 is decor et formae species permixta virili.'
 occurrit genitor: 'Quid si aut Bacchea ferentes

orgia, Palladias aut circum videris aras?
et dabimus, si forte novus cunctabitur auster.’
excipiunt cupidi et tacitis spes addita votis. 815
cetera depositis Lycomedis regia curis
tranquilla sub pace silet, sed longa sagaci
nox Ithaco, lucemque cupit somnumque gravatur.

Vixdum exorta dies et iam comitatus Agyrte
Tydides aderat praedictaque dona ferebat. 820
nec minus egressae thalamo Scyreides ibant
ostentare choros promissaque sacra verendis
hospitibus. nitet ante alias regina comesque
Pelides: qualis Siculae sub rupibus Aetnae
Naidas Hennaeas inter Diana feroxque 825
Pallas et Elysii lucebat sponsa tyranni.
iamque movent gressus thiasisque Ismenia buxus
signa dedit, quater aera Rheae, quater enthea pulsan
terga manu variosque quater legere recursus.
tunc thyrsos pariterque levant pariterque reponunt 830
multiplicantque gradum, modo quo Curetes in actu
quoque pii Samothraces eunt, nunc obvia versae
pectine Amazonio, modo quo citat orbe Lacaenas
Delia plaudentesque suis intorquet Amyclis.
tunc vero, tunc praecipue manifestus Achilles 835
nec servare vices nec bracchia iungere curat;
tunc molles gressus, tunc aspernatur amictus
plus solito rumpitque choros et plurima turbat.
sic indignantem thyrsos acceptaque matris
tympana iam tristes spectabant Penthea Thebae. 840

Solvuntur laudata cohors repetuntque paterna
limina, ubi in mediae iamdudum sedibus aulae
munera virgineos visus tractura locarat
Tydides, signum hospitii pretiumque laboris,
hortaturque legant, nec rex placidissimus arcet. 845
heu simplex nimiumque rudis, qui callida dona
Graiorumque dolos variumque ignoret Ulixem!
hic aliae, qua sexus iners naturaque ducit,
aut teretes thyrsos aut respondentia temptant

tympana, gemmatis aut nectunt tempora limbis; 850
arma vident magnoque putant donata parenti.
at ferus Aeacides, radiantem ut comminus orbem
caelatum pugnās — saevis et forte rubebat
bellorum maculis — adclinem conspicit hastae,
infremuit torsitque genas, et fronte relictā 855
surrexere comae; nusquam mandata parentis,
nusquam occultus amor, totoque in pectore Troia est.
ut leo, materno cum raptus ab ubere mores
accepit pectique iubas hominemque vereri
edidicit nullasque rapi nisi iussus in iras, 860
si semel adverso radiavit lumine ferrum,
eiurata fides domitorque inimicus, in illum
prima fames, timidoque pudet servisse magistro.
ut vero accessit propius luxque aemula vultum
reddidit et simili talem se vidit in auro, 865
horruit erubuitque simul. tunc acer Ulixes
admotus lateri summissa voce: 'Quid haeres?
scimus' ait, 'tu semiferi Chironis alumnus,
tu caeli pelagique nepos, te Dorica classis,
te tua suspensis exspectat Graecia signis, 870
ipsaque iam dubiis nutant tibi Pergama muris.
heia, abrumpe moras! sine perfida palleat Ide,
et iuvet haec audire patrem, pudeatque dolosam
sic pro te timuisse Thetin.' iam pectus amictu
laxabat, cum grande tuba sic iussus Agyrtes 875
insonuit; fugiunt disiectis undique donis
inplorantque patrem commotaque proelia credunt.
illius intactae cecidere a pectore vestes,
iam clipeus breviorque manu consumitur hasta —
mira fides — Ithacumque umeris excedere visus 880
Aetolumque ducem: tantum subita arma calorque
Martius horrenda confundit luce penates.
inmanisque gradu, ceu protinus Hectora poscens,
stat medius trepidante domo, Peleaque virgo
quaeritur. 885

Ast alia plangebat parte resectos

Deidamia dolos, cuius cum grandia primum
lamenta et notas accepit pectore voces,
haesit et occulto virtus infracta calore est.
demittit clipeum regisque ad limina versus
attonitum factis inopinaque monstra paventem, 890
sicut erat, nudis Lycomedem adfatur in armis:
‘Me tibi, care pater — dubium dimitte pavorem — ,
me dedit alma Thetis: te pridem tanta manebat
gloria; quaesitum Danais tu mittis Achillem,
gratior et magno, si fas dixisse, parente 895
et dulci Chirone mihi. sed corda parumper
huc adverte libens atque has bonus accipe voces:
Peleus te nato socerum et Thetis hospita iungunt
adlegantque suos utroque a sanguine divos.
unam virgineo natarum ex agmine poscunt: 900
dasne? an gens humilis tibi degeneresque videmur?
non renuis? iunge ergo manus et concipe foedus
atque ignosce tuis. tacito iam cognita furto
Deidamia mihi; quid enim his obstare lacertis,
qua potuit nostras possessa repellere vires? 905
me luere ista iube; pono arma et reddo Pelasgis
et maneo. quid triste fremis? quid lumina mutas?
iam socer es’ — natum ante pedes prostravit et addit —
‘iamque avus. inmitis quotiens iterabitur ensis,
turba sumus.’ tunc et Danai per sacra fidemque 910
hospitii blandusque precum conpellit Ulixes.
ille, etsi carae conperta iniuria natae
et Thetidis mandata movent prodique videtur
depositum tam grande deae, tamen obvius ire
tot metuit fatis Argivaque bella morari; 915
fac velit: ipsam illic matrem sprevisset Achilles.
nec tamen abnuerit genero se iungere tali:
vincitur. arcanis effert pudibunda tenebris
Deidamia gradum, veniae nec protinus amens
credit et opposito genitorem placat Achille. 920
Mittitur Haemoniam, magnis qui Pelea factis
impleat et classem comitesque in proelia poscat.

nec non et geminas regnator Scyrius alnos
deducit genero viresque excusat Achivis.
tunc epulis consumpta dies, tandemque resectum 925
foedus et intrepidus nox conscia iungit amantes.

Illius ante oculos nova bella et Xanthus et Ide
Argolicaeque rates, atque ipsas cogitat undas
auroramque timet. cara cervice mariti
fusa novi lacrimas iam solvit et occupat artus: 930
‘Aspiciamne iterum meque hoc in pectore ponam,
Aeacide? rursusque tuos dignabere portus,
an tumidus Teucrosque lares et capta reportans
Pergama virgineae noles meminisse latebrae?
quid precer, heu! timeamve prius? quidve anxia mandem, 935
cui vix flere vacat? modo te nox una deditque
inviditque mihi. thalamis haec tempora nostris?
hicne est liber hymen? o dulcia furta dolique,
o timor! abripitur miserae permissus Achilles.
i — neque enim tantos ausim revocare paratus — , 940
i cautus, nec vana Thetin timuisse memento,
i felix nosterque redi! nimis improba posco:
iam te sperabunt lacrimis planctuque decorae
Troades optabuntque tuis dare colla catenis
et patriam pensare toris, aut ipsa placebit 945
Tyndaris, incesta nimium laudata rapina.
ast egomet primae puerilis fabula culpa
narrabor famulis aut dissimulata latebo.
quin age, duc comitem; cur non ego Martia tecum
signa feram? tu thyrsa manu Baccheaque mecum 950
sacra, quod infelix non credet Troia, tulisti.
attamen hunc, quem maesta mihi solacia linquis,
hunc saltem sub corde tene et concede precanti
hoc solum, pariat ne quid tibi barbara coniunx,
ne qua det indignos Thetidi captiva nepotes.’ 955
taliam dicentem non ipse inmotus Achilles
solatur iuratque fidem iurataque fletu
spondet et ingentis famulas captumque reversus
Ilion et Phrygiae promittit munera gazae.

inrita ventosae rapiebant verba procellae.

Liber Secundus

Exiit implicitum tenebris umentibus orbem
Oceano prolata dies, genitorque coruscae
lucis adhuc hebetem vicina nocte levabat
et nondum excusso rorantem lampada ponto.
et iam punicea nudatum pectora palla 5
insignemque ipsis, quae prima invaserat, armis
Aeaciden — quippe aura vocat cognataque suadent
aequora — prospectant cuncti iuvenemque ducemque
nil ausi meminisse pavent; sic omnia visu
mutatus rediit, ceu numquam Scyria passus 10
litora Peliacoque rates escendat ab antro.
tunc ex more deis — ita namque monebat Ulixes —
aequoribusque austrisque litat fluctuque sub ipso
caeruleum regem tauro veneratur avumque
Nerea: vittata genetrix placata iuvenca. 15
hic spumante salo iaciens tumida exta profatur:
‘Paruimus, genetrix, quamquam haut toleranda iuberes,
paruimus nimium: bella ad Troiana ratesque
Argolicas quaesitus eo.’ sic orsus et alno
insiluit penitusque Noto stridente propinquis 20
abripitur terris: et iam ardua ducere nubes
incipit et longo Scyros discedere ponto.

Turre procul summa lacrimis comitata sororum
commissumque tenens et habentem nomina Pyrrhum
pendebat coniunx oculisque in carbasa fixis 25
ibat et ipsa freto, et puppem iam sola videbat.
ille quoque obliquos dilecta ad moenia vultus
declinat viduamque domum gemitusque relictæ
cogitat: occultus sub corde renascitur ardor
datque locum virtus. sentit Laertius heros 30
maerentem et placidis adgressus flectere dictis:
‘Tene’ inquit, ‘magnæ vastator debite Troiae,
quem Danaae classes, quem divum oracula poscunt,
erectumque manet reserato in limine Bellum,

callida femineo genetrix violavit amictu 35
commisitque illis tam grandia furta latebris
speravitque fidem? nimis o suspensa nimisque
mater! an haec tacita virtus torperet in umbra,
quae vix audito litui clangore refugit
et Thetin et comites et quos suppresserat ignes? 40
nec nostrum est, quod in arma venis sequerisque precantis;
venisses—’ dixit; quem talibus occupat heros
Aeacius: ‘Longum resides exponere causas
maternumque nefas; hoc excusabitur ense
Scyros et indecores, factorum crimina, cultus. 45
tu potius, dum lene fretum Zephyroque fruuntur
carbasa, quae Danais tanti primordia belli,
ede: libet iustas hinc sumere protinus iras.’

Hic Ithacus paulum repetito longius orsu:
‘Fertur in Hectorea, si talia credimus, Ida 50
electus formae certamina solvere pastor
sollicitas tenuisse deas, nec torva Minervae
ora nec aetherii sociam rectoris amico
lumine, sed solam nimium vidisse Dionen.
atque adeo lis illa tuis exorta sub antris 55
concilio superum, dum Pelea dulce maritat
Pelion, et nostris iam tunc promitteris armis.
ira quatit victas; petit exitialia iudex
praemia; raptori faciles monstrantur Amyclae.
ille Phrygas lucos, matris penetralia caedit 60
turrigerae veritasque solo procumbere pinus
praecipitat terrasque freto delatus Achaeas
hospitis Atridae — pudet heu miseretque potentis
Europae! — spoliat thalamos, Helenaque superbus
navigat et captos ad Pergama devehit Argos. 65
inde dato passim varias rumore per urbes,
undique inexciti sibi quisque et sponte coimus
ultores: quis enim illicitis genialia rumpi
pacta dolis facillique trahi conubia raptu
ceu pecus armentumve aut vilis messis acervos 70
perferat? haec etiam fortes iactura moveret.

non tulit insidias divum imperiosus Agenor
mugitusque sacros et magno numine vectam
quaesiit Europen aspernatusque Tonantem est
ut generum; raptam Scythico de litore prolem 75
non tulit Aeetes ferroque et classe secutus
semideos reges et ituram in sidera puppim:
nos Phryga semivirum portus et litora circum
Argolica incesta volitantem puppe feremus?
usque adeo nusquam arma et equi, fretaque invia Graïs? 80
quid si nunc aliquis patriis rapturus ab oris
Deidamian eat viduaque e sede revellat
attonitam et magni clamantem nomen Achillis?
illius ad capulum rediit manus ac simul ingens
inpulit ora rubor; tacuit contentus Ulixes. 85

Excipit Oenides: 'Quin, o dignissima caeli
progenies, ritusque tuos elementaque primae
indolis et, valida mox accedente iuventa,
quae solitus laudum tibi semina pandere Chiron
virtutisque aditus, quas membra augere per artes, 90
quas animum, sociis multumque faventibus edis?
sit pretium longas penitus quaesisse per undas
Scyron et his primum me arma ostendisse lacertis.'

Quem pigeat sua facta loqui? tamen ille modeste
incohat, ambiguus paulum propiorque coacto: 95
'Dicor et in teneris et adhuc reptantibus annis,
Thessalus ut rigido senior me monte recepit,
non ullos ex more cibos hausisse nec almis
uberibus satiasset famem, sed spissa leonum
viscera semianimis lupae traxisse medullas. 100
haec mihi prima Ceres, haec laeti munera Bacchi,
sic dabat ille pater. mox ire per invia secum
lustra gradu maiore trahens visisque docebat
adridere feris nec fracta ruentibus undis
saxa nec ad vastae trepidare silentia silvae. 105
iam tunc arma manu, iam tunc cervice pharetrae,
et ferri properatus amor durataque multo
sole geluque cutis; tenero nec fluxa cubili

membra, sed ingenti saxum commune magistro.
vix mihi bisseos annorum torserat orbes 110
vita rudis, volucris cum iam praevertere cervos
et Lapithas cogebat equos praemissaque cursu
tela sequi; saepe ipse gradu me praepete Chiron,
dum velox aetas, campis admissus agebat
omnibus, exhaustumque vago per gramina passu 115
laudabat gaudens atque in sua terga levabat.
saepe etiam primo fluvii torpore iubebar
ire supra glaciemque levi non frangere planta.
hoc puerile decus. quid nunc tibi proelia dicam
silvarum et saevo vacuos iam murmure saltus? 120
numquam ille inbelles Ossaea per avia dammas
sectari aut timidas passus me cuspide lyncas
sternere, sed tristes turbare cubilibus ursos
fulmineosque sues, et sicubi maxima tigris
aut seducta iugis fetae spelunca leaenae. 125
ipse sedens vasto facta exspectabat in antro,
si sparsus nigro remearem sanguine; nec me
ante nisi inspectis admisit ad oscula telis.
iamque et ad ensiferos vicina pube tumultus
aptabar, nec me ulla feri Mavortis imago 130
praeteriit. didici, quo Paeones arma rotatu,
quo Macetae sua gaesa citent, quo turbine contum
Sauromates falcemque Getes arcumque Gelonus
tenderet et flexae Balearicus actor habenae
quo suspensa trahens libraret vulnera tortu 135
inclusumque suo distingueret aera gyro.
vix memorem cunctos, etsi bene gessimus, actus.
nunc docet ingentes saltu me iungere fossas,
nunc caput aerii scandentem prendere montis,
quo fugitur per plana gradu, simulacraque pugnae 140
excipere inmissos curvato umbone molares
ardentesque intrare casas peditemque volantis
sistere quadriugos. memini, rapidissimus ibat
imbribus adsiduis pastus nivibusque solutis
Sperchios vivasque trabes et saxa ferebat, 145

cum me ille immissum, qua saevior impetus undae,
stare iubet contra tumidosque repellere fluctus,
quos vix ipse gradu totiens obstante tulisset.
stabam equidem, sed me referebat concitus amnis
et latae caligo fugae; ferus ille minari 150
desuper incumbens verbisque urgere pudorem.
nec nisi iussus abi: sic me sublimis agebat
gloria, nec duri tanto sub teste labores.
nam procul Oebalios in nubila condere discos
et liquidam nodare palen et spargere caestus, 155
ludus erat requiesque mihi; nec maior in istis
sudor, Apollineo quam fila sonantia plectro
cum quaterem priscosque virum mirarer honores.
quin etiam sucos atque auxiliantia morbis
gramina, quo nimius staret medicamine sanguis, 160
quid faciat somnos, quid hiantia vulnera claudat,
quae ferro cohibenda lues, quae cederet herbis,
edocuit monitusque sacrae sub pectore fixit
iustitiae, qua Peliacis dare iura verenda
gentibus atque suos solitus pacare biformes. 165
hactenus annorum, comites, elementa meorum
et memini et meminisse iuvat: scit cetera mater.'

The Biography



The Capitoline Hill, Rome. In 86 the Emperor Domitian founded the Capitoline Games, a quadrennial contest, emulating the Greek Olympic Games, which was comprised of athletic displays, chariot racing and competitions for oratory, music and acting. Statius competed in the competition, most likely in 94 AD, but failed to win the coveted prize, taking the loss very badly. The disappointment may have prompted the poet's return to Naples in c. 94.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE AND WORKS OF STATIUS by J. H. Mozley



Publius Papinius Statius was born at Naples, probably about a d. 40. (See references to his *senium* in *Silv* iii. 5. 13, 21, iv. 4. 70, v. 2. 158; the date also suits his father's lifetime. Other information will be found for the most part in *Silo* v. 3, and iii *a*.) His father was a native of Velia on the Lucanian coast, but had moved to Naples, where as "grammaticus" he conducted a school to which pupils came from all parts of Italy. Here he taught literature, which in the secondary school of the time meant poetry, with exposition of grammar, style, and antiquities; he also instructed his pupils in augury and the various rites of the Roman state religion. He was himself a poet, and had Avon prizes in the Grecian contests, at Delphi, Nemea, and the Isthmus; he had written a poem on the civil war of a d. 69, and was planning another on the eruption of Vesuvius in 79, when he died. He was buried on an estate that he possessed near Alba.

The younger Statius owed to his father's personal care and instruction all his education and poetical training, a debt which he acknowledges in terms of the warmest gratitude; he soon gained fame as a poet himself, and Avon prizes at the local competitions in Naples, held at the festival of the Augustalia. Probably after his father's death he left Naples and went to Rome, where he lived till the year 94, writing poetry and declaiming extracts from his *Thebaid* before crowded audiences. He was awarded a prize in the annual poetical contest held by Domitian in honour of Minerva at his residence near Alba, but to his great disappointment, when he competed at the important Capitoline "Agon" in Rome, he met with failure. In Rome he married his wife Claudia, a widow with one daughter. The poet himself was childless, and adopted a slave-boy born in his own house, whose early death he mourns with real sorrow in his last, unfinished poem. About 94 he returned in broken health to

Naples, where he died, probably in 95 or 96.

Although one may take Juvenal's word for it that Statius, in spite of the large crowds his recitations drew, made no money out of poetry, one need not assume that he lived in poverty and was forced to write libretti for the stage in order to make a living; there is nothing in his own writings that implies it, while from the mention of his father's estate at Alba one would gather that he was at least moderately well off. The poet, at any rate, seems to have lived on terms of familiarity with the wealthy Pollius Felix and others, and his wife was the personal friend of Priscilla, whose husband Abascantus was secretary of state. It seems doubtful whether he formed part of any circle or group of poets; his patrons were those of Martial, Atedius Melior, for instance, and Pollius Felix, but neither writer ever mentions the other, whence some have thought that there was a coolness between the two. This is not unlikely, for from what we know of the two men we should conclude that they were extremely uncongenial to each other. Juvenal indeed, is the only Latin writer before Sidonius Apollinaris who does mention Statius, though his influence upon later poets was strong.

His relations with the Court were those of the humble aspirant to Imperial favour; his poems upon the colossal equestrian statue of Domitian, the Emperor's 17th Consulship, the tresses of his favourite Earinus, and the banquet to which the Emperor invited him, are all marked by the flattery that the subservience of the times was eager to bestow; Domitian affected to be a patron of letters, even a poet himself: it was one of the stock compliments of the time to wonder whether he were more brilliant a poet or a commander. Statius frequently mentions his campaigns, and follows the convention of pretending to be planning a great work on the Emperor's wars, to which the actual epics are only preliminary.

Statius flourished in the middle of the Silver Age of Latin literature, coming after Seneca and Lucan (though born about the same time as the latter), before Juvenal, Tacitus, and the younger Pliny, and contemporary with Martial, Valerius Flaccus, and Quintilian. The later part of his life was thus spent under the Flavian dynasty, which in spite of its faults did really encourage letters. He also lived at a time when the practice of recitation had become a

popular rage; his pleasant voice his poetry, with its subtle effects of alliteration and assonance, its brilliant passages, startling tricks of style and language, its avoidance of the obvious and occasional touches of the pathetic and the horrible, all this combined to tickle the ears and feelings of the popular audiences of the day. Or again, with an Italian's gift of rapid improvisation, he would delight a patron by dashing off a description of his villa in marvellously smooth hexameters, or oblige him with occasional verse on any subject, serious or trivial.

The poetry of Statius shows many of the characteristics of the Silver Age. (i.) The rhetorical influence is evident, frequency of hyperbole, straining after epigram and point, superficiality and obedience to text-book models, (ii.) There is a tendency to realism which shows itself now in the petty, now in the horrible, as for instance in many of the battle-scenes of the *Thebaid*. (iii.) There is a general diminution of scale, characteristic perhaps of Silver periods of literature, when the great subjects are exhausted and poets descend to more trivial themes; or, if the grand themes are still attempted, the treatment is unequal to them, and lack of proportion is the inevitable result. The search for new matter takes the form of describing things that the great poets would not have thought worth describing, or not suitable to poetry. The Description, indeed, as such, the *ἱκφρασις*, becomes a recognized literary form, (iv.) Another note of the age is the conscious learning which obtrudes itself into many a passage; poets could draw on learned compilations of mythological matter and general information, on treatises dealing with anything from astronomy to horse-breeding, while audiences probably relished such compliments to their culture.

The Silvae

These are a collection of occasional poems, many of which were written hastily to order or just as the fancy seized the poet; some, on the other hand, like the lament for his father (v. 3), are more carefully constructed. Six of them are Poems of Consolation, for the loss of a father, a wife or a favourite slave; this was a type of composition of which the Romans were very fond, in prose as well as in poetry.

They cannot be said to be the most successful examples of Statius' verse; to our taste, at any rate, they appear artificial and exaggerated in tone, and lacking in real sentiment, also for the most part much too long. It should be said, however, that he was following the rules laid down for that type of poem by the schools of rhetoric and obeyed by the poets. This applies also to other literary forms, for example, the Epithalamion (i. 2), a much more pleasing composition, the Propempticon, or Farewell-piece (iii. 2), the Description ('*Ἐκφρασις*', i. 3, i. 5, ii. 2, iv. 6), the Genethliacon (ii. 7), a name more commonly given to a poem written for the birthday of a living person, while here the occasion is the anniversary of the birthday of the poet Lucan, who has been dead some years.

More attractive again are such pieces as that on Atedius Melior's Tree (ii. 3), where Statius' lightness of touch and fancy appears at its best, or the account of the entertainment given to the people by the Emperor on the Kalends of December (i. 6). The two imitations of Horatian lyric (iv. 5 and 7) are feeble, but the hendecasyllables of iv. 9 are spirited, and in the Lucan ode Statius succeeds in rising above the conventional, and there is real feeling in Calliope's lament for her favourite poet. The piece which he addresses to his wife Claudia is also marked by sincerity, and so are the two poems on the deaths of members of his own family, his father (v. 3) and his adopted son (v. 5); this latter poem is left unfinished, but it seems to have been planned with the same elaboration that we find in the case of the former. Best known of all the *Silvae*, probably, is the little sonnet-like poem addressed to the god Sleep (v i).

Statius' chief merit in this class of poetry consists perhaps, in his descriptive power, and to it we owe much of our knowledge of Roman society in the Flavian era. The scenes are varied, and include a state banquet given by the Emperor (iv. 2), a fashionable wedding (i. 2), country-seats of patrons of literature (i. 3, ii. 2), funeral scenes (ii. 1, ii. 6. etc.), the new road along the coast of Campania recently opened xii (iv. 3), an entertainment in the Amphitheatre (i. 6). Among the personages introduced are the poet's own friend and patron Pollius Felix, wealthy and cultured, the literary Epicurean Manlius Vopiscus, the soldier Rutilius Gallicus, of noble birth and distinguished career, the young Maecius Celer, just off to the Syrian

front, the art-collector Novius Vindex, the freedman Claudius Etruscus, who had risen from slavery to the position of secretary of finance to the Emperor Nero, one of the three great secretaryships of the early Empire.

By far the greater number of these pieces are written in hexameters, a metre first applied by Statius, so far as we know, to the composition of *genre* poems of this kind, and employed with marvellous facility and ease; the lines run smoothly, though without the extreme elaboration that we sometimes find in the *Thebaid*, and without great attention to variation of pause, or subtlety of alliterative effect. He displays wonderful skill in expression and choice of phrase; when describing, for instance, the water flowing in its silver channels in the Baths of Claudius Etruscus, he says (i. 5. 48):

argento felix propellitur unda argentoque cadit, labrisque
nitentibus instat delicias mirata suas et abire recusat.

and, of the stream outside:

extra autem niveo qui margine caeruleus amnis vivit.

In his address to his wife, again, speaking of the peacefulness of Naples, he says (iii. 5. 87):

nulla foro rabies aut strictae in iurgia leges, inorum iura viris
solum et sine fascibus aequum.

As a poet who depicts the society of his time, Statius compares very favourably with Martial in avoiding the coarseness that was so prominent a feature of it, and his poetry reflects the sensitiveness of his character.

The Thebaid and Achilleid

To be the author of a great epic poem is to count as one of the few great poets of the world, and it need hardly be said that Statius can

make no claim to that honour. He stands with Apollonius, Lucan, and Valerius Flaccus in the second rank. Yet the *Thebaid* received high praise from the elder Scaliger and the post-Renaissance critics, and the tendency to-day is, if anything, to underrate its merits. It is, indeed, somewhat lacking in unity of theme, yet it must be remembered that much depends on the story chosen, and that of the Seven against Thebes is a difficult one to handle owing to the double interest: the Argive and the Theban strands are hard to combine satisfactorily; in fact, the unity of the plot is a duality, i. — *e* the conflicting fortunes of the two brothers, and the real interest consists in the gradual approach and closer interweaving of the two “subjects,” until, as in the *stretto* of a fugue, the climax is reached in the great duel of Bk. XI. Here, it is true, Statius might have stopped, with the *Aeneid* as his model, but the Theban legend is fruitful in incident, and it might be justly urged that the burial of the Argives, with the appeal of Theseus that it involves, together with the striking episode of the “strife of flames upon the funeral pyre” of the two rivals, formed a real part of the story; it must be admitted, however, that the xiv *Thebaid* does not end satisfactorily: that Statius was worried over it we may gather from a hint in the *Silvae* (iii. 2. 143). H. W. Garrod has defended the *Thebaid* as an “episodic” epic, and that is probably its most conspicuous feature; at the same time, though Statius had every right to make his poem episodic if he wished, it would be wrong to overlook the unity that it does possess, even if it is less obvious than in a story like the *Argotiadica*, for example, or the *Aeneid*.

The same critic has spoken of the poet’s “tenderness, mysticism, and piety — in short, his Christianity”; it is true that the tenderness at times becomes sentimentality, at times a morbid emphasizing of the horrible, yet, generally speaking, Statius responds sympathetically to the tender emotions: Argia as wife and daughter, Hypsipyle in the anguish caused by the loss of the babe Opheltes, Antigone as sister, are faithfully drawn, and the relations of mother and son seem to have had a particular attraction for Statius, *e g.* Atalanta and Parthenopaeus, Ismenis and Crenaeus in the *Thebaid* (notice, too, how many times he refers to Ino and Palaemon), Thetis and Achilles in the *Achilleid*.

With regard to the gods, Jupiter and Nature are both referred to by Statius as supreme, quite apart from Fate or Destiny; he does not actually identify them, but we may see here a tendency to syncretism, or the regarding of different deities as so many manifestations of one ultimate Power, characteristic of the time. This probably originated with Stoicism, and Stoicism had become the religion of educated Romans, so far as they had one. "Dieu, c'est-à-dire Jupiter, et la Nature ne sont qu'un. Et cette raison divine, cette loi universelle, c'est le *Fatum* qui ne fait aussi qu'un avec la Nature et avec Dieu" (Legras, *La Thébaïde* p.160). Another apparent inconsistency has been laid to the poet's account, in making Jupiter first announce his decision to embroil Argos and Thebes, and then attempt to deter the Argives on their march by hostile omens; in this, however, he is doing no more than ancient writer's commonly do in accepting both divine warning by omen and divine irrevocable will without attempting to reconcile them. That Statius was not unaware of the difficulty can be gathered from his discussions of divination and of omens (iii. 551, vi. 934).

The divine personages who make up the supernatural machinery of the *Thebaid* are treated in the familiar, realistic manner of traditional epic; certain personifications take their place among them, such as Sleep, Virtue, Piety; the latter, in her well-meant effort to stop the duel of the brothers, is treated very unceremoniously by Tisiphone, and hustled off the battle-ground whence she flees complaining to the Thunderer (xi. 457 *sq.*). Yet occasionally the poet strikes a higher note; one of the best known passages of the *Thebaid* is the description of the altar and grove of Clementia at Athens, in which the poet gives beautiful expression to the old Athenian ideal of humanity, lines that breathe the spirit of a purer religion than any known to the ancient world, and may well have given rise to Dante's belief that Statius was a Christian.

We may now consider briefly some further characteristics of the *Thebaid*. (I.) Statius revels in description: in the first book we have the storm that Polynices encounters on his way to Argos, in Bk. II. the exciting narrative of the ambush set for Tydeus on his return from Thebes, in Bk. III. the auspice-taking, in Bk. IV. the necromancy. The games in Bk. VI. are well done, Statius, no doubt,

owing several details to his own close observation in the Roman Circus, as, for example, in the boxing and wrestling matches and the discus-throwing. In Bks. VII. and X. we have two set pieces, the abode of Mars and of Sleep respectively. Battle-pieces since Homer have, as a rule, been failures, in painting as well as in poetry; those of the Silver Latin poets suggest the large canvases of third-rate Italian painters, depicting, for example, the capture of Constantinople by the Latins for the adornment of a ducal palace; the same grim detail, the same hectic fury marks the battle-scenes of Statius. It is in description that his love of hyperbole becomes most manifest: the mountain in ii. 32 *sq* is so high that the stars rest upon it, the serpent in v. 550 covers several acres, the Centaur plunging down from the mountain dams a whole river with his bulk, iv. 144, etc.

(II.) Passages of this kind, and also similes, are in many cases borrowed from previous poets, Virgil, Ovid, or Lucan. Statius in borrowing often adds details to fill out the picture, or elaborates the language: often, too, he introduces a sentimental touch, *i e* he either attributes feeling to inanimate objects, or looks at the scene from the point of view of some living person: in ix. 90 the sea-resisting rock “feels no fear,” or in the simile of the snake renewing its skin (iv. 93 *sq.*) a countryman is introduced (“a! miser agrestum;” etc.) Some of his similes are worthy of notice, for example, that which compares the calm produced by the majesty of Jove’s utterance to that of lakes and streams under the tranquil influence of summer (iii. 253), or that of Pluto coming into his inheritance of the underworld (xi. 413). But we get rather tired of the endless bulls and boars to which his heroes are compared.

(III.) Of Statius’ inequality as a poet it is hardly necessary to speak; he suffers from lack of judgement, rising now to the wildest heights of exaggeration and bombast, and now sinking to trivial and absurd detail, as when persons are described kissing each other through closed visors (“galeis iuvat oscula clausis inserere,” iv. 20), or when Mercury’s hat gets wet in the rainstorms of Thrace (vii. 39). At the same time there are lines of great poetic beauty: i. 336-341, a beautiful description of the rising moon, “her airy chariot hung with pearly dew” (Pope’s transi.), and of Sleep’s mysterious influence; or the moonbeams glinting on the bronze armour of the ambuscade (ii.

532), or a picture of sunrise on the fields in winter (iii. 468-9). or the last breeze dying away on drooping sails (i. 479-481); again, in i. 264-5, we seem to hear the beating of the gongs and the Availing of votaries by some sacred river of the East, while the mysterious figure of the Lydian Bacchus, the spirit of the golden river, appears dimly in "aut Hermi de fontibus aureus exis" (iv. 389). There is an effective touch in the duel of the brothers, when the ghosts of Thebans are permitted by Pluto to throng the hills around and watch the combat; in the journey of Argia, too, in Bk. XII. there are some romantic scenes (xii. 22S *sq.*, 250-54, 267-77).

(IV.) His love of epigram and point has already been mentioned; here we may notice that it is frequently seen at the ends of paragraphs, sometimes producing an effect of overstrain, even of obscurity. Examples may be found in i. 335, i. 547 (see note), i. 623, iii. 323, 1-98, v. 485, 533, vi. 795, x. 570.

(V.) Statius has great skill in versification, which shows itself not perhaps so much in the art of varying the pauses and the rhythm of his lines, though in this respect he has learnt more from Virgil than either Ovid or Lucan, as in his use of assonance and alliteration. The latter especially repays study, both in the single line, *e g* i. 123, ii. 89, v. 14, v. 615, and in passages of two or three lines, in which usually one or two consonant or vowel sounds predominate, with others as subordinate, *e g* ii. 118-19 ("f"), ii. 538 *sq.* ("c," "t," with "f," "v," "h") or even in longer passages, *e g* i. 342-54). There is also sometimes remarkable symmetry in words, see the simile in iv. 93 *sq.*, where the verb "erigitur" connects two groups, each consisting of two sub-groups, in each of which again noun and adjective are arranged in a chiasmus, and he often brackets his phrase between noun and adjective or participle, as in ii. 252-3, 718-9. It was, no doubt, technique of this kind, combined with the pointed phrases, the appearance of familiar similes and descriptions in more elaborate form, and the sprinkling of recondite mythological allusion that made Statius a popular poet with the audiences of Flavian Rome.

(VI.) Statius takes great liberties with the Latin language. There are phrases which it is impossible to make sense of, if taken grammatically and literally. Legras is reduced to despair by some, as by v. 115 "vel iustos cuius pulsantia menses vota tument?" he says

“c’est, si on l’ose dire, un pur charabia”; so too “raptus ab omni sole dies” (v. 364), where the scholiast is compelled to exclaim “nove dictum!” and, perhaps the most untranslatable of all, “viderat Inachias rapidum glomerare cohortes Bacchus iter” (vii. 45). It is impossible, in translating, to do more than give the general sense; the poet is here a pure “impressionist.” Postgate has made a similar comment on the style of Propertius (*Select Elegies*, Introduction, p lx), “The outlines of his pictures lack sharpness and precision, and the colours and even forms on his canvas tend to blend imperceptibly with each other. Thus it is the general *impression* that fascinates us in his poems, not the proportion and perfection of the details.” Again, speaking of Propertius’ excessive subtlety of construction, he says “sometimes the sentence must be read as a whole, as it is almost impossible to give it a detailed construction.... Cf i. 20. 24, where I have compared the tendency of the Greek tragedians to spread the meaning through a sentence rather than apportion it among the words.” This very well expresses the character of the Statian phrase, and in this respect Statius is the successor of Propertius. Both poets perhaps were led to write in this way by an attempt to avoid the hard glitter of Latin, so suitable to the clear-cut phrase of Horace or the snap and polish of Ovid or Martial, and a longing for occasional halftones, for lack of precision. Possibly it is due to Virgilian influence, for part of Virgil’s genius consists in being able to give a soft, mysterious effect without any sense of unnaturalness. Statius aims at a like effect, but fails to avoid unnaturalness.

(VII.) Psychologically, he is not conspicuous for remarkable insight; it may be said, however, in his defence that the epic does not demand refinement in character drawing, which is rather the business of the drama. In the *Thebaid*, as, indeed, in the *Aeneid*, the treatment of character is broad: Amphiaras the seer, Eteocles the fierce tyrant, Capaneus the scorner of the gods, Hippomedon the stalwart warrior, Parthenopaeus the gallant youth, are all true to type; more carefully drawn are Adrastus and his son-in-law Polynices; the former is depicted as an elderly monarch, grave, kindly, diplomatic, and perhaps somewhat lacking in decision, while the latter is shown as not altogether easy in mind, even diffident, about the undertaking, and ready to lapse into utter despair and to contemplate suicide when

things go badly; at the same time he is not quite ingenuous (see iii. 381-2), and on comparing him with his brother one feels there is not much to choose. Tydeus is vigorously drawn, especially in the episode of the embassy; he becomes the mere warrior in Bk. X., and his memory is stained by the inhuman gnawing of his enemy's skull with which the book, and his career, closes.

A few touches show some degree of insight: the people of Crotopus, king of Argos (in Adrastus' narrative), have just been saved from the awful pestilence sent on them by Apollo: "stupet Inacha pubes, magnaue post lacrimas etiamnunc gaudia pallent" (i. 619)? "the Inachian youth stand appalled and their joy, though great now sorrow is ended, even yet is pale and dim." Capaneus is said to be "largus animae modo suaserit ira" (iii. 603). "lavish of his life, should wrath but urge him," a development of the Horatian "animaeque magnae prodigum Paullum." The Argive leaders who have taken the place of those slain in the fight are "haud laeti seque hue crevisse dolentes" (x. 181). "feeling no joy, but grief that they are raised so high." Thetis, urging the boy Achilles to don the girlish clothes, adds "nesciet hoc Chiron" (*Ach* i. 274), "Chiron will not know of it."

The plot of the *Thebaid* was probably modelled on the vast Epic of Antimachus (fl c. 400 b c.), which Cicero calls "magnum illud volumen," and of which Porphyrio tells us that the author had completed twenty-four books before the Argive host had been brought to Thebes. Statius, though he took only six books in doing it has been criticized for unnecessary delay in arriving at Thebes, but he was probably wise, as twelve books of battle-scenes would have rendered his work as unreadable as the seventeen books of Silius Italicus' *Punica*.

The following is a summary of the chief events of the *Thebaid*: i. 1-45, Invocation of the Emperor. 45-311, Oedipus, who has blinded himself, invokes Tisiphone and curses his sons: she hears him and hurries to Thebes: the brothers, full of mutual hate, agree to reign alternately: the lot falls on Eteocles, and Polynices reluctantly departs. Jupiter announces his decision to set Argos against Thebes. 312-720, Polynices' journey to Argos and his experiences there, ii. 1-33, Apparition of the shade of Laius to Eteocles. 134-305,

Wedding celebrations of Polynices and Tydeus at Argos. 306-74-3, and iii. 1-439, Tydeus goes on embassy to Thebes, the ambush set for him, his victory and return. 440-721, Auspice-taking; war is decided on at Argos, iv. 1-344, Catalogue of the Argive host. 3i5-6t5, Plight of Thebes: necromancy. 646-842 and v. 1-16, Bacchus causes the Argives to be delayed by thirst: they are saved by Hypsipyle, nurse of Opheltis, infant son of Lycurgus, king of Nemea. 17-498, Narrative of Hypsipyle. 499-753, Death of Opheltis vi. 1-248, Funeral rites of Opheltis, 249-916, Funeral games, vii. 1-397, Catalogue of the Thebans. 398-823, The fighting begins: disappearance of the augur Amphiarus viii. 1-312, Amphiarus's reception in the underworld; his successor is appointed. 312-766, Exploits and Death of Tydeus ix. 1-569, Exploits and Death of Hippomedon. 570-907, Fears of Atalanta for Parthenopaeus: his death, x. 1-261, Intervention of Juno. 262-448, Night-raid and devotion of Hoples and Dymas. 449-826, Devotion of Menoeceus. 827-936, Death of Capaneus xi. 1-311, Preparations for the duel between the brothers. 315-761, The duel. Exile of Oedipus, and end of the war xii. 1-463, Funeral rites of the Thebans. Devotion of Antigone and Argia. 464-809, Intervention of Theseus, after supplication of Argive women at Athens.

In the concluding lines of the poem Statius exhorts his *Thebaid* to follow far behind the divine *Aeneid* and to reverence its footsteps; from them we may gather that he was humble enough not to think of himself as a rival of Virgil, though acknowledging that poet as the chief inspirer of his work. In fact, the plan and chief incidents of the *Aeneid* seem to be reproduced with an astonishing scrupulousness in the *Thebaid*. Virgil, however, was not the only poet whom Statius laid under contribution; an analysis of the *Thebaid* shows that Ovid and Lucan, and in a lesser degree Seneca and Valerius Flaccus, have incidents, or at any rate, details borrowed from them by our author. In versification he is, on the whole, Ovidian; there is no trace of Virgil's gravity, or of Lucan's heaviness, but the hexameter is predominantly the smooth, unelided line of Ovid, though the hephthemimeral pause and caesura, characteristic of Silver Latin verse, is frequent.

As for the authorities on whom Statius drew for the actual story of

the Seven, we have already referred to the *Thebaid* of Antimachus; its fragments, however, are so scanty that any estimate of his debt to it must be purely conjectural, and the same applies to the *Oedipodeia* and *Thebais* of the Epic Cycle. Of extant authors, Aeschylus and Sophocles appear to have contributed comparatively little, for, to take one or two instances, the character of Eteocles is quite different in Aeschylus's *Septem*, and in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* Jocasta commits suicide and Oedipus leaves the city immediately after the discovery, while in the *Thebaid* they are both there all the time. On the other hand the *Phoenissae* of Euripides is closely followed (probably also the *Hypsipylea*) and Seneca's *Phoenissae*. For the narrative of Hypsipyle both Statius and Valerius Flaccus elaborate considerably on the simpler account of Apollonius of Rhodes.

There is, in fact, little if anything to show that Statius has done more than work on the traditional epic material in a manner that seemed to him best suited to the requirements of his audience; that he was successful and enjoyed considerable popularity as a poet we may gather both from the passage of Juvenal quoted above and from the closing lines of the poem itself (xii. 812-15):

iam certe praesens tibi Fama benignum stravit iter
coepitque novam monstrare futuris.
iam te magnanimus dignatur noscere Caesar,
Italia iam studio discit memoratque iuventus.

“Of a truth already present Fame hath of her bounty paved thy way, and begun to hold thee up, young as thou art, to future ages. Already great-hearted Caesar deigns to know thee, and the youth of Italy eagerly learns and recounts thy verse.”

The fame that Statius so anxiously yearned for was his throughout the Middle Ages. His epic, though of the ancient world, seems to herald the new age: Amphiaraus is almost the warrior bishop, Chaucer, indeed, calls him “the bisshop Amphiorax”; dragons, sorcerers, enchanted woods, maidens waving to their lovers from high turrets, and other romantic features fill the pages of his poem, while its actual influence can be traced in medieval literature. All readers of Dante remember the meeting of Statius and Virgil in

Purgatory (Cantos 21, 22), and the touching lines in which the poet narrates the recognition of Virgil by his humble and admiring follower. Dante's belief that Statius was a Christian was due, according to Comparetti to the latter's reverence for Virgil, whom the Middle Ages accepted as a prophet of Christ on the strength of the Fourth Eclogue. Mr. P. H. Wicksteed thinks that the words of xii. 496 *ignotae tantum felicibus arae* ("the altar is unknown only to the prosperous") may have led to an identification with the altar to the Unknown God, "ignoto Deo," seen at Athens by St. Paul (Acts xvii. 23). See also A. W. Verrall's ingenious suggestions in "The Altar of Mercy" (*Collected Literary Essays*, 1913). Besides this there is a conjecture of Prof. Slater: Statius, as we know from *Silv* iv. 4. 53, was in the habit of frequenting the tomb of Virgil outside Naples; he suggests that this fact, together with the well-known tradition of St. Paul's visit to that spot, may have given rise to a story of the meeting of the two, and of Statius' conversion to Christianity as the result.

It is quite possible, however, that Dante originated the idea for his own purposes; this was the opinion of Benvenuto, the commentator on Dante (quoted by Vernon, *Readings on the Purgatorio*, ii. — 188), and there seems to be no earlier tradition. When Dante and Virgil meet Statius, he is in the Circle of Avarice, where he has been 500 years, having previously spent 300 in the Ante-Purgatory, and 400 in the Circle of Sloth. The latter punishment was due, as he explains, to his unreadiness to declare himself a Christian, the former to his prodigality (by which, apparently, Dante accounts for his poverty, see Juvenal vii. 82). Statius enlightens Dante on two matters, first, the natural causes of winds and earthquakes (C. 21, *cf. Theb* vii. 809 *sq.*), and second, the nature of the soul when separated from the body (C. 25). This latter knowledge depended to some extent on revealed truth, for which Statius needs to be a Christian. If it be asked why Statius was chosen, the answer may be (i.) that he was highly esteemed in the Middle Ages, (ii.) that his *Epie* contains similar discussions, though certainly none so long (augury, iii. 482, 551, physiology of horses, vi. 333, omens, vi. 934. earthquakes, vii. 809).

Owing to the poet's ill-health and comparatively early death no more than 1127 lines of this epic appear to have ever been written. In them we have the visit of Thetis, anxious for her son at the outbreak of the Trojan War, to Chiron, under whose charge he is; she conveys the youthful Achilles to Scyros, disguises him as a girl and entrusts him to the care of King Lycomedes; then come the deception of Deidamia, the discovery of Achilles by Ulysses and Diomedes, and his departure for Troy. There the fragment ends.

The poet's style is simpler and less artificial than in the *Thebaid*, and the narrative flows more evenly. The most successful part of it is undoubtedly the discovery of Achilles, i. 675-920, while the story of his introduction to and courtship of Deidamia is also well told.

The mss of Statius

The "Silvae."

The only ms that deserves separate notice is the fifteenth-century ms at Madrid (hence known as *Matritensis*), from which it has been proved that all other existing mss are derived (see Klotz, *Introduction to the Silvae*, Teubner edition). Besides this ms., designated M, there are a certain number of emendations entered by Politian in a copy of the first edition in the Corsinian library at Rome; some of these he expressly describes as taken from an old ms he has recently discovered (14-94-), which ms he says is that which Poggio, the Renaissance scholar, brought into Italy from Gaul. He also says that from this ms all other mss are derived, but although we can say the same of M we cannot identify it with Poggio's ms., for (i.) Politian states that the line *Silv* i. 4. 86a, which is in M and subsequent mss., was not in Poggio's. (ii.) Some of the excerpts from the latter differ from M. (iii.) He would not have called a fifteenth-century ms. "vetustus." This ms of Poggio is usually identified with the one that Poggio says he *sent* to Florence in 14-16 or 1417, from Constance or St. Gall, which was probably a copy of a much older one that he found there. It is quite possible, however, that it was the original that he sent to Florence, and not a copy, and Politian's

description of Poggio's ms as "vetustus" would help this identification. See the *Classical Review*, Nos. 15-17, 20, 26, 27, 32.

M: codex Matritensis M 31, dated about 1430.

M1: first hand, *i e* transcriber of the ms.

M2: second hand, *i e* first corrector of the ms. m: later correctors.

L: codex Laurentianus (only of ii. 7), dated tenth century.

Pol.: emendations of Politian (fifteenth century), if from Poggio's ms., "from P," is added. Dom.: Emendations of Domitius Calderinus (fifteenth century).

Γ: later MSS.

The "Thebaid" and "Achilleid."

The mss of the *Thebaid*, and in a lesser degree, of the *Achilleid* are extremely numerous, the former epic especially having been very popular in the Middle Ages. They fall into two well-defined groups, of which one has only one representative, the so-called Puteanus at Paris, written at the end of the ninth century, and the other consists of a number of mss of the tenth and eleventh centuries, the offspring of a ms now lost, but dating from nearly a century before Puteanus. These, following the Teubner and Oxford editions, I have designated P and ω respectively. When any particular one of the latter class is quoted, ω, of course, signifies *the other* members of the group. Later mss may be ignored.

There are remarkable differences between the two groups; the most striking will be found at iv. 555, x. 135. xi. 490. but on frequent occasions the difference is one that can hardly be accounted for on grounds of ordinary textual error. H. W. Garrod in his Introduction to the *Thebaid* and *Achilleid* suggests that the double tradition may be due to a revised edition made by the poet himself.

On the whole the readings of P are to be preferred, and they deserve careful consideration even when they seem most difficult; but in many cases it is only judgement that can decide what Statius could or could not have written. Though the mss that form the ω-group hang very much together, D and N have perhaps more individuality than the others, see Garrod, Introd pp ix, x.

The *Achilleid* is found in P and in a number of the ω -group; also in a ms denoted E, in the College Library at Eton.

P: codex Puteanus (Parisinus 8051), end of ninth century.

Q: codex Parisinus 10317, tenth century.

K: codex Gudianus 54, tenth to eleventh century.

(These contain both *Thebaid* and *Achilleid*).

S — : codex Parisinus 1304-6, tenth century.

D: ms at St. John's Coll. Camb., tenth centnry.

N: ms at Cheltenham, tenth to eleventh century.

B: codex Bambergensis, eleventh centnry.

C: codex Cassellanus, 164, eleventh century.

L: codex Lipsiensis, i. 12, eleventh century.

(These contain only the *Thebaid*).

E: codex Etonensis, tenth or eleventh century (*Achilleid* only).

ω : consensus of mss other than P.

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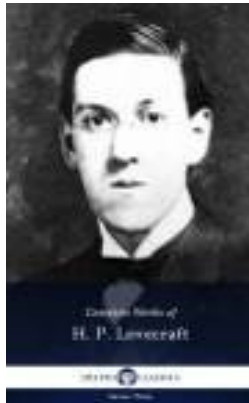
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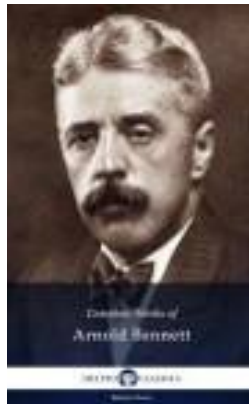
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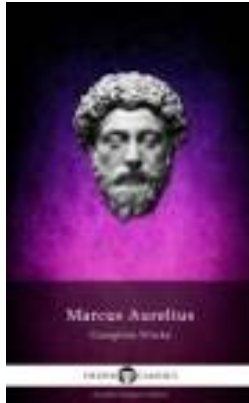
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Statius died in Naples, the city of his birth, in c. 96 AD